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GEORGE ROMNEY

By

ARTHUR B. CHAMBERLAIN

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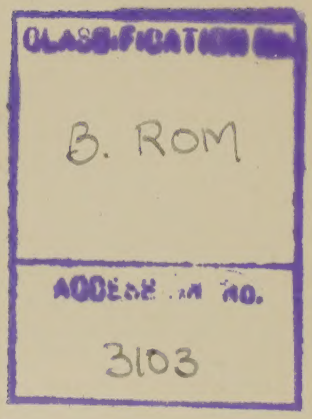

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE first part of this book is devoted to the life and career of Romney, and the writer has attempted to make it as complete and accurate as possible. Frequent use has been made of the earlier biographies by his son, the Rev. John Romney, and his bosom friend, William Hayley, as these, in spite of their prolixity, contain by far the fullest details of Romney's personal history. The life of a painter who is completely wrapped up in his art, as Romney was, is usually an uneventful one; but it is, nevertheless, when the painter in question is a man of genius, of very real interest to those who have come under his spell. By many Romney is still regarded merely as the man who painted and loved Lady Hamilton and deserted his own wife for more than thirty years—an inaccurate and exaggerated summary of his life, based upon insufficient knowledge. This point of view the writer has attempted to dispel by placing in their true perspective the many good qualities of his character, qualities which more than counterbalanced his less worthy ones. The second part deals with Romney's habits and methods of work, while the third is concerned with him as an artist, and with the position he holds in the English school of painting.

A number of the portraits and pictures chosen to illustrate Romney's art are here reproduced for the first time from photographs of the original paintings, thanks to the kindness of the owners. Among them—to mention only a few—may be noted four of the five pictures from Lord Lathom's collection, the 'Serena Reading' belonging to Major Thurlow, the 'Mrs. Lee Acton' (Lord De Saumarez), the 'Bosanquet Family' (Major Bosanquet), the early Collingwood portraits, the Liverpool cartoons, and several from

Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne's collection. The writer has to offer his most sincere thanks to the many owners of Romney's works who have so generously allowed them to be reproduced, and due acknowledgment of this courtesy will be found in each case in the List of Plates. During the printing of the book several owners who had granted this permission, and others whose pictures are described though not given as illustrations, have died, and it has not been possible in every case to make the necessary alterations in the text. In the same way, more than one collection has been sold, or individual pictures have changed hands, during the same period, and here again it has not been always possible to trace the present ownership of such works.

The writer's sincere thanks are also due to those who have helped him in the compilation of his book, more particularly to Mr. Lawrence Romney, the painter's great-grandson, who has given him more valuable information and assistance than he can acknowledge at all adequately. He has also to thank Mr. Ernest H. Hare, who kindly undertook to draw up the List of Modern Engravings after Romney; Mr. J. Graham Kenion, the honorary secretary of the Liverpool Royal Institution, who has given every facility for the study and photographing of the cartoons in his charge; Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, Mr. W. Roberts, Mr. W. Sichel, and others, who, from time to time, have corresponded with the writer on details in connection with Romney's life or paintings; and, lastly, to the editor of the series in which this book is published, Dr. James H. W. Laing, for much valuable help in reading the proofs, and in many other directions.

A. B. C.

City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
February 25th, 1910

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GEORGE ROMNEY

PART I: HIS LIFE

I

GEORGE ROMNEY, who, from very humble beginnings, succeeded in working his way, with little aid except from his own natural gifts, into the front rank of the painters of his day, has suffered greater fluctuations of reputation from the fickleness of artistic fashion than any other artist of his period. It was not his fate to struggle through life unrecognised, fighting ineffectually against poverty and neglect, to be acclaimed as a genius only when the brush had finally dropped from his fingers; nor, on the other hand, was he one of those happier beings whose fame remains undiminished long after they themselves have passed away. For some twenty years after his return from Italy in 1775 he divided the patronage of the town with Reynolds and Gainsborough, and, judging by the number of his sitters, was for a time the most popular painter in London, so that, with a scale of prices which appears absurdly low when compared with modern standards, he was yet able to make a large income.

In spite of this very complete recognition during his lifetime, he was forgotten almost as soon as he was dead, and before many years had passed his finest portraits were regarded with indifference, and were often pushed away into corners as of no account, to make room for fresher canvases by far less gifted men who happened to be the fashionable face-painters of a later day. This sudden and almost total eclipse of his reputation was owing, to some extent, to the fact that he never became a member of the Royal Academy, and did not send a single picture to its exhibitions; and, indeed, never showed his work in public at all, except during the

first few years after his removal to London, when his powers had not reached maturity. From this cause his great artistic capabilities were known only to those who went to him for their portraits; and his sitters were drawn chiefly from the aristocracy and the higher ranks of society, while the pictures themselves were sent from his studio straight to the great country-mansions and houses for which they were intended, where few but the personal friends of the owners had opportunities of seeing them. To the general body of the public, who flocked to the Royal Academy exhibitions year after year, he was but a name, and even his name was soon forgotten.

Another reason for this quick forgetfulness is to be looked for in Romney's own character. He was unsociable in his habits, and very rarely mixed in general society. Unlike Reynolds, he had few intimate friends among men of commanding intellect, and was seldom a visitor at the tables of great people. In the published memoirs and diaries of his contemporaries, and of those of the succeeding generation, there is little mention of his pictures and even less of the man himself, whereas references to Reynolds and his portraits are met with constantly, and to Gainsborough almost as often. It is true that he had a zealous advocate in William Hayley, whose great and quite undeserved reputation as a poet gave him the ear of the public; but Hayley's opinions on art and literature, though received with acclamation by those who had no sound knowledge of such matters, were little considered by his more intellectual contemporaries, and after his death remained unread and were quickly forgotten; so that the mutual admiration society which gathered round his hospitable hearth at Eartham, in which Romney was most at home, did little by its adulation for the future upholding of the painter's fame. Miss Seward was lavish in her praises when he painted her portrait; and more references to him are to be found in her *Letters* than in any other contemporary publication of the kind. Richard Cumberland, too, did him good service with his pen, and in a more public way, at a time when such recognition was of value to him; but the only writer of outstanding genius in whose pages Romney's name occurs was William Cowper, who wrote the well-known sonnet, 'To George Romney, Esq.' immediately after sitting to him for his portrait at Hayley's country house. These lines will live, but to-day Hayley's fulsome inanities in verse are completely forgotten, except by those who are forced to hurry through them when engaged upon a study of Romney's life and art. Forgotten, too, are Richard Cumberland's laborious lines in his honour,

and Anna Seward's rhyming praises, and the more ponderous attempts of the still smaller poetic fry.

Fifty years after his death the few people who made it their business to write about such things had but faint praise to bestow upon his work. It was very rarely that one of his pictures was seen in public, though between the year 1817 and 1855 some twenty of them were exhibited at the British Institution. After that date examples of his art were shown there in much greater numbers; as many as eleven were lent in 1862, and twenty-one in 1863, among them being some of his finest achievements. In the National Portrait Exhibitions, held at South Kensington in 1867 and 1868, thirty-six of his pictures were included, and nine had been shown some years previously at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. From the date of the first of the Winter Exhibitions of the Royal Academy, in 1871, Romney may be said to have come into his own kingdom again. In this first year only one of his pictures was on the walls, but it was the beautiful 'Mrs. Russell and Child,' which at once attracted the attention and pleased the fancy of the public; and since that date full justice has been rendered by the Royal Academy to one who during his lifetime was ignored by most of its members. Since the seventies his reputation has increased by leaps and bounds, until now it stands higher than it did in the days when he was at work in his studio in Cavendish Square; higher indeed than it deserves, if it is gauged by the extraordinary prices now paid for his finest, and often even for his most indifferent, efforts. The scant, almost contemptuous, consideration of fifty years ago has given place to an extravagant praise and an exaggerated estimation which attempts to accord him a higher place in the ranks of England's greatest painters than he has a right to fill. His pictures are now so eagerly sought after, and such great sums are paid for them in the auction-room, and still greater ones when they change hands by private treaty, that it has become impossible for any but the most wealthy to possess them. No English painter's works have increased so rapidly in value during the 'picture boom' of recent years as his, and to-day hardly a month goes by without one of them changing ownership at some extraordinary figure.

When, in 1807, a few years after the painter's death, 'the select and reserved collection of portraits of the eminent and very celebrated artist' was put up for sale at Christie's, few connoisseurs, with the exception of one or two artists, showed any desire to make purchases,

and most of the more important pictures were bought in, and were not seen again in the auction-room until the sale held after the death of Romney's son in 1834. For sixty years or so examples of his work rarely came under the hammer, and when they did they fetched very small prices. Early in the seventies, however, a keener appreciation began to be shown. In 1875, two pictures of Lady Hamilton as the 'Tragic Muse' and the 'Comic Muse,' from the late Marquis of Hertford's collection, realised 240 and 310 guineas respectively, and in the same year 'Lady Hamilton at the Spinning Wheel' was acquired by the Earl of Normanton for 770 guineas, and the same lady as a 'Bacchante' was knocked down for 200 guineas. The so-called 'Parson's Daughter,' now in the National Gallery, was bought at the Anderdon sale in 1879 for 250 guineas, and in the same year the well-known picture of 'Lady Hamilton as Ariadne,' in a sea-cave, only fetched 220 guineas. In 1884, a portrait of Mrs. Jordan, apparently the one now in the collection of Sir Cuthbert Quilter, was bought for £735. Prices had further advanced by 1890, when thirteen Romneys were offered at Christie's from the collection of Mr. Walter J. Long, of Preshaw, great-nephew of the surgeon who was one of Romney's most intimate friends. Among them the well-known full-length of 'Lady Hamilton as Circe' produced 3850 guineas, and the 'Bashful Child,' 950 guineas. In the same year 'Lady Hamilton as Sensibility,' of which Hayley became the original possessor at a cost of only 100 guineas, was bought for 2900 guineas, and, at the Carwardine sale, 1050 guineas was given for 'Lady Hamilton as Contemplation,' and 1750 guineas for 'Mrs. Butler *née* Carwardine.' Two years later 'Lady Augusta Murray, Duchess of Sussex,' a half-length, brought 3800 guineas, and a number of other examples were sold for what were then considered high prices. In 1895 from 1650 to 2000 guineas was no unusual figure for a good specimen, but all such amounts were entirely eclipsed in the following year, when, at one of Messrs. Robinson and Fisher's sales, the final bid for the famous 'Beauty and the Arts,' belonging to Lord Clifden, containing portraits of the owner's great-grandmother and her sister, Lady Clifden and Lady E. Spencer, daughters of the Duke of Marlborough, was the astonishing one of £11,025. In the same year the beautiful picture of the two little daughters of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, now in the Byers collection in America, realised 2550 guineas, and a number of other canvases surpassed that amount.

MRS. GEORGE ROMNEY

BY PERMISSION OF MESSRS. SHEPHERD BROS.

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RICHARD CUMBERLAND

IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

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During the past ten years these prices have often been more than doubled at auctions, and trebled and even quadrupled in more private transactions, whenever collectors with long purses are determined to have a fine set of fair women from Romney's brush regardless of all considerations of cost. At the Duke of Cambridge's sale in 1904, the half-length of 'H. R. H. Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester,' which, painted in 1791, was left on the artist's hands unpaid for, and some years later sold by John Romney to Sir William Beechey for 20 guineas, was purchased for £4305. There is no need to multiply instances; more than enough of them have been given to show with what extraordinary rapidity Romney's portraits have risen again in public favour, and to what great lengths rival collectors will go, so that to-day it causes no surprise when an exceptionally fine example reaches a sum of five figures before the eager amateur of his works is able to possess himself of it. Under these conditions it is small wonder that many owners of Romney's pictures have not hesitated to imitate Charles Surface in knocking down their ancestors to the highest bidder. Such a temptation must often prove to be irresistible; and so from more than one old country-house the family portraits have discreetly vanished to find a second home in one of the more modern mansions of the aristocracy of wealth. However much one may regret this gradual breaking up of many of the private collections of England, and the spiriting away of masterpieces to America, such a course on the part of those who possess works so eagerly sought after, and so extravagantly valued, is not surprising, for the inducement held out is, undoubtedly, one of the strongest nature.

In this way Romney, who, while he lived, was one of the most popular portrait-painters of his day, and, for years after his death one of the least considered, has been placed in recent years on so high a pinnacle, that the great and outstanding abilities upon which his claim to a place in the ranks of great painters must rest are in danger of again suffering total or at least partial eclipse; for the lovers of good painting, exasperated by the exaggerated reputation he holds in the markets, and irritated by injudicious and uncritical praise, and this fierce fight for the possession of rows of pretty faces, show an inclination to go to the other extreme. Already a tendency to over-emphasise the painter's faults at the expense of the many fine qualities which are to be found in his work, shows itself in their criticisms; and in this way the pendulum may swing again, and just as violently, in the

opposite direction. It should be the business, then, of the earnest student to make an attempt to find Romney's true and permanent position both with regard to his contemporaries and to his successors, without, on the one hand, too careful a consideration of his present value in the money market, or too easy a surrender of the judgment before the extraordinary charm and captivating sweetness of his sympathetic renderings of womanly beauty and youthful grace; and on the other hand, without being influenced unduly by the pronouncements of those who would relegate him to a quite minor position in the school of English painting, as one whose work lacks many of the higher qualities of art, and only pleases by the dexterity of its handling, and its power of expressing a delightful though superficial convention of prettiness, devoid of any real insight into character, and clothed in only an empty elegance.

II

GEORGE ROMNEY'S great-grandfather was a 'statesman,' or yeoman proprietor, in the village of Colby, near Appleby, and his small estate was inherited by his son George, the artist's grandfather. The latter left Westmorland at an early age, owing to the disturbed condition of that district during the years of the Civil War, and, after a short period spent in Lancaster, moved across the sandy estuary of Morecambe Bay, and settled down for life in the peninsula known as Furness. He came of a good, sturdy stock, and had reached the ripe age of sixty before he married, but lived to rear a family of twelve and to see his own grandchildren before dying at ninety-six. His younger brother, William, venturing further from home, went with the army of King William into Ireland, where he fought at the battle of the Boyne, eventually settling near Cork, as steward to Lord Inchiquin. Either he or one of his descendants married a member of the Inchiquin family, and Romneys may still be encountered in that part of the world. Other branches of the family remained in Westmorland, and the name is to day not uncommon in that county, and the adjacent ones of Cumberland and Lancashire. The customary spelling of it was Rumney, and the artist himself was the first to alter it permanently to Romney. In signing the indenture which apprenticed him to Christopher Steele in 1755 he still used the older form, and in 1763, the year in which he first exhibited in London, with the Free Society of Artists, his name is given in the catalogue as Rumney.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, in his book on the artist, adopts the theory of Mr. A. W. Rumney, of Millfell, in Watermillock, Cumberland, that the name is derived from 'Romany,' and that all the Romneys or Rumneys are descended from gipsies, who flourished in the border counties in the old days, attracted thither, among other reasons, by the facilities the district offered of escaping from justice, which was pitiless where vagrants and 'Egyptians' were concerned, by the simple device of striking tents and slipping into Scotland or back into England as occasion necessitated. Some of these gipsies would settle

down in course of time to more reputable pursuits as ordinary villagers or small landowners, and would at first be known to their neighbours as Romanys, until in the end it became their recognised surname. There may be some truth in this theory. Certainly the name is far from uncommon on the border, and in more than one case can be traced back through several centuries. The ancestors of Mr. Rumney, who suggests this derivation, have owned the Millfell estate for more than three hundred years, but are in no way connected with the family of the artist.

On the other hand, the painter's great-grandson, Mr. Lawrence Romney, has little faith in the 'gipsy' theory, though undoubtedly many members of the family have possessed the wandering, restless spirit of that race. The name has always been pronounced as though spelt with the 'u,' in contradistinction to the 'o' sound in 'Romany.' A certain number of people of Celtic origin have always existed in that part of England, and it is, therefore, more likely that the Romney family, more than one member of which has been, while others still are, decidedly Celtic in appearance and disposition, is of such descent. But however this may be, the family must be regarded as one of only comparatively lowly origin. Dwellers in the south have little knowledge of how fine a class as a whole is that of the Westmorland 'statesman,' and the Romneys were no exception to the rule; indeed, it is only necessary to examine the existing portraits of the painter's brothers, and to read such of their letters as remain in the possession of their descendants, to see that they came of a family of more than ordinary gifts.

The painter's father, John Romney, a native of Dalton-in-Furness, was by trade a carpenter, joiner and cabinetmaker, who by his own exertions had built up by degrees a business of some importance. He was a man of unusual ability, with considerable practical knowledge of architecture and engineering, and a taste for drawing; so that he not only designed and made furniture, but on occasion acted as architect, and carried out the internal decoration in some of the more important houses in the district. He had, too, some skill in mechanics, and constructed all the engines which were used for pumping out the water which from time to time flooded the neighbouring iron mines. Like Gainsborough's brother John, he was a born 'schemer,' with the difference that his inventions were of real service, whereas John Gainsborough's devices resulted in little else but the wasting of money. Some at least of John Romney's inventions were of practical use, so

that in this he more closely resembled Gainsborough's clearer-headed brother, Humphry.

He was instrumental in introducing spoke wheels for carts instead of the solid clog wheels which until his day were in universal use in the Furness district, and he also made some important improvements in the plough, more especially by the invention of the iron mould-board, with which he was the first to essay the cultivation of his own land. He even went as far as to attempt a plough to be driven by wind, but over this he came to grief, almost as badly as 'Schemer Jack' did over his flying-machine. Not contented with these diverse interests, he was also an experimental agriculturist, and in this again was in advance of his neighbours. He had inherited a small freehold farm called Beckside from his father, who had purchased it after selling his Appleby estate, and here he introduced various improved methods of farming. This property was on the sea-coast, with a stiff clay soil, and he was the first to discover the value of shell-fish as a fertilising agent. He also invented a machine for chopping up furze or whins, with which, mixed with straw, he fed his cattle in winter. He is said, again, to have been the first cabinetmaker in the district, and perhaps in Lancashire, to make use of the new wood, mahogany, for he purchased a chest of this material brought from the West Indies by a sailor, out of which he made a piece of furniture.

He was, indeed, in all ways a notable person, with a larger library of books than most men in his station of life, and considerable scientific and general knowledge. His grandson, John Romney, speaks of him, in his stilted periods, as 'this amiable progenitor, who by his strict probity, disinterestedness, and singleness of heart, had obtained among his acquaintance the characteristic epithet, *honest*; a title which had also been conferred upon his father before him;' and again as 'a man of mild and placid manners, retired and contemplative in his habits, correctly moral in his conduct, and unaffectedly pious.' His religious beliefs were characterised, we gather from the same source, by a cautious tendency to be on the safe side at all costs. 'His notions of religion were just, being equally remote from cold philosophy and blind enthusiasm. I well remember his saying, though then a mere boy, that it was our interest to make up our minds to the faith of the christian religion; because, if it should not prove true, we were still benefited by it; but if it should, of which there was no good reason to doubt, how great then would be our recompense!'

In spite of his ingenuity, his habits of hard work and a business of considerable extent, his means were always modest, for he lacked those qualities which go to the making of worldly success. Here again, there is some resemblance between the Romney and Gainsborough families, for John Gainsborough, the artist's father, suffered many losses through carelessness in the management of his affairs, and his readiness to forgive and forget a debt. In the same way John Romney had too implicit a belief in other people's honesty, and was always more occupied with the work upon which he was engaged at the moment, than with the profits to be gained by it. His grandson infers that even if he had been more business-like in his habits, he would still, in all probability, have wasted his money upon expensive experiments. He managed, however, to give each member of his numerous family a respectable education, and to leave something for division among those of them who survived him. To George, the eldest son at the time of his decease, he bequeathed his small property of Upper Cocken in Furness.

He married Ann Simpson, the daughter of a 'statesman' in Cumberland, who owned the estate of Sladebank, in Millom. She came of a 'genteel family,' says Hayley. Her mother, Bridget Park, of Millwood, near Dalton, was a granddaughter of Thomas Park, High Constable of Furness from 1642 to 1647, who wrote a history of the events which took place in that district during the Civil War. Mrs. Romney was a clever, capable woman, who might have been of real help to her husband in his business if the cares of her household had not occupied the whole of her time. Her grandson puts the case in a nutshell when he says that 'the important duties of a mother claimed her undivided attention.' They had eleven children, ten sons and one daughter, most of whom died in childhood or early manhood. The eldest son, William, was a clever youth, who was intended for a University career, and so received a better education than his brothers. It was decided that he should enter Trinity College, Cambridge, but, being of an adventurous spirit, and attracted by the glamour of the West Indies, whither several of his acquaintances had gone, he abandoned scholarship in favour of a business career. He was apprenticed to a wealthy merchant in Lancaster, and was sent out to the firm's house in the Islands in 1762, dying six years later at Dominica, at the age of thirty-seven. He was accompanied by a younger brother Lawrence, who died at Antigua in 1772, aged thirty-five.

Another brother, James, born in 1745, entered the service of the East India Company, and made for himself an honourable reputation

and position, eventually rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He was highly respected both in his professional and private capacity, and was a man of some taste, fond of scribbling verses, and 'trifling agreeably on the violin.' He left behind him a number of unpublished manuscripts, including several comedies and an account of the siege of Dharwar. He owed his start in life to his artist brother, who provided the necessary funds for his outfit and initial expenditure, at a time when money was harder to gain than it was later in his career; but Romney felt amply repaid by his brother's success, and the two always held each other in affectionate regard. Colonel Romney died in Bath in 1807, and was buried in Bath Abbey.

A fourth brother, Peter, possessed talents of no mean order, and at one time promised to rival his famous brother as an artist; but his character was weak, and his career, which was marked by much distress and misery, was cut short by an early death, which habits of intemperance had helped to hasten. He was fond of poetry and music; and, judging by his letters, had considerable power of literary expression. He died at Stockport in 1777, at the age of thirty-four.[1]

[1] For more complete details of the Romney family see Appendix I.

III

GEORGE ROMNEY, the third child and second son of John and Ann Romney, was born at Beckside, on the outskirts of the town of Dalton, in Furness, on December 15th (old style), 1734. Part of the house is still standing near the present railway station. Furness is that corner of Lancashire, north and west of Morecambe Bay, which lies between Cumberland and Westmorland, and is also known as North Lonsdale. There is a High and Low Furness; Whitestock, the estate Romney bought in his old age, Hawkshead and Coniston being in the former, and Barrow, Dalton and Ulverston in the latter. Much of the land in Furness at one time belonged to the rich and powerful Furness Abbey.

His education was somewhat scanty. When quite a little lad, he was sent to the village of Dendron, two or three miles from Beckside, where he boarded with some friends of the Romney family named Gardner, and attended a school kept by the Rev. Mr. Fell. This entailed no great drain upon his father's resources, as the fees were only five shillings a quarter, and his board and lodgings cost less than five pounds a year. His school-days, however, came to an end when he was eleven years old, either because he showed no great ability or fondness for his books, or from his father's wish to have him back at home. In 1742 John Romney had sold Beckside, and had purchased a small estate in the same parish called Upper Cocken, about a mile west of Furness Abbey; and to this new home young George came on leaving Dendron.

The house was built on a kind of terrace, looking west over Walney Channel and Island, and commanding a wide view of the Irish Sea, while from the hill immediately behind the prospect was a magnificent one. On the south was the wide bay of Morecambe, and to the north the estuary of Duddon, which when the tide is full has all the appearance of a fine lake. To the north-west rose the dark mountain, Black Combe, and still further north, the pointed crest of Scawfell and other hills. The view to the south-west is to-day marred by the

smoke from the chimneys and furnaces of Hindpool, Barrow, but in Romney's day it was one of great charm. Such scenery, seen daily, and under all conditions of weather, must have made a deep impression upon the boy, and implanted in him that love of nature which was one of his most marked characteristics. Its influence is to be seen in more than one of his pictures, such as the early 'King Lear in the Storm,' or the later 'Tempest,' and the recollection of the sea-view from Upper Cocken can be discerned in the background of many of his portraits.

His education was, no doubt, continued to some extent under his father's supervision, as the cabinet-maker had a love of books, and a thirst for knowledge; but almost from the beginning the boy was also taught the rudiments of the business, and gradually grew to be of some assistance in the workshop. Hayley says that by the time he was twelve he was consulted by his father as to the details of all work in hand, though this seems improbable, and that he helped to superintend the workpeople. He continued to be employed in this way until he reached his twenty-first year, though few definite details of this period of his life have been recorded. He acquired some facility in wood-carving, and the cutting of little figures, and became skilful enough with the chisel to make himself a fiddle, which he ornamented with his own designs. Hayley adds that he inherited something of his father's ingenuity in the invention of mechanical contrivances.

Little, again, is known of the way in which his artistic genius first began to show itself, but in all probability it received its first impulse from his father, whose business required a knowledge of drawing and the designing of ornaments. It would be only natural that he should wish to teach his son what little of draughtsmanship he himself knew in order that he might gain a mastery of the trade, and in due time take his place as the head of the business.

Hayley, in suggesting the cause which first turned Romney's thoughts more seriously towards art as a pursuit, tells a story which has done service in the early history of more than one famous painter. In attempting to describe a stranger of somewhat unusual appearance whom he had seen in church, young Romney found it impossible to do so adequately in words; so, seizing a pencil, with a few rapid strokes he produced a likeness so life-like that his parents were both amazed and delighted, and their praise, which, no doubt, through affection for the young artist, was more lavish than critical, gave him the first serious push along the road he was bound, sooner or later, to take. On the other hand, according to Richard Cumberland, it was one of his

father's cabinet-makers, a certain Sam Knight, who must be regarded as his artistic godfather, for he lent the boy a magazine containing engravings which George copied. Cumberland speaks of Knight as 'this unconscious patron of the arts, and founder, as he may be called, of the fortunes of our Painter'—a somewhat laughable exaggeration, which both Hayley and John Romney ridicule in their biographies. His father was a subscriber to the *Universal Magazine*, and George may have copied some of the cuts with which it was illustrated, chiefly portraits and armorial bearings; but the small family library contained a book of much greater value to a youth whose artistic impulses were already beginning to strive to find expression. This was a translation of Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting*, which contained a number of good engravings.

Such a work, from the pen of one of the greatest masters of painting, must have had considerable influence over the mind of the youthful Romney, and from its study, no doubt, his first inkling of the true principles of art was obtained. That he valued the book is shown, perhaps, by the fact that he twice inscribed his name in it, in 1754 and 1755, and in each case surmounted the signature with an ornamental design. Another book in which his name occurs, again in a decorative setting, is a copy of Le Brun's *Passions*, dated 1755. His father also possessed a small volume called *Art's Masterpiece*, which gave practical instruction in painting and the making and grinding of colours.

According to the Rev. John Romney, the boy's determination to become a painter was greatly fostered by Mrs. Gardner, the sister of a business friend of the elder Romney, Alderman Redman, an upholsterer of Kendal. It was probably in her house that George lived while attending the Dendron school. During a visit paid to Upper Cocken, she was greatly interested in the drawings the boy had made, and encouraged him by every means to cultivate his talents. One of his earliest attempts in portraiture was a likeness of this lady, who declared that 'he had a brilliant genius, capable of acquiring great lustre in the profession of a painter'; and to her, says his son, 'the world is chiefly indebted for eliciting the hidden sparks of his genius.' In after years, her own son, Daniel Gardner, studied for a time under Romney at Kendal, and became a portrait-painter in crayons of no small repute.

The man, however, who had the greatest influence upon Romney at this period of his life was a certain John Williamson, then living in Dalton, and working as a watchmaker. By all accounts he was a man of exceptional talents, and was attracted by the signs of genius even

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then apparent in the boy. This 'intimate friend of an elevated and accomplished spirit,' as Hayley describes him, was devoted to music, and taught his young friend to play the violin. On one occasion they made together a memorable journey to Whitehaven to hear the great Felice Giardini. It was this famous violinist who so enraptured Gainsborough, and his playing had a like effect upon Romney, who, for some little time after hearing him perform, hesitated whether to make music or painting his profession. Music, indeed, has had an irresistible charm for more than one great painter. John Constable sternly turned his back upon its subtle fascination, because he feared that it would stand in the way of his master-ambition of becoming a famous artist. Gainsborough's boundless enthusiasm for every musical instrument he chanced to hear played by a master-hand is well known. He not only collected them regardless of cost, but also learnt to play upon them with more or less skill, and snatched many an hour from his easel for this purpose. The musical parties in which Romney took his share at Williamson's house had their counterpart in the Club which held its meetings in Ipswich at about the same date, merry concerts in which Gainsborough's fiddle took a leading share. To some extent Romney retained his love of the sister art throughout his life. Up to the last he kept a violin of his own making in his studio, and now and then played upon it when thinking out the design for a picture, finding in music, as others have done, a stimulus to his imagination.

His son says that it was often his habit, when stepping back to see the effect of his painting, to pick up this fiddle, and 'amuse himself by carelessly flourishing with some favourite air, till a new idea, or alteration, came across his mind.' Cumberland tells the same tale, with an effort to be amusing, and with no little exaggeration as to the extent of Romney's violin-building:—

'Smitten also with an embryo passion for the concord of sweet sounds, which he had probably never heard but in his dreams, he conceived the idea of transplanting the arts of Cremona to his native town of Dalton, and began a manufactory of violins, which he disposed of to the rural amateurs, who were, perhaps, as little instructed in the use of those instruments as he had been in the formation of them. The worst among them, however, made a noise, that we may suppose amused the children, and sounded forth the fame of the operator through the neighbouring cottages; they served, likewise, the further and better purpose of putting a little money into the pocket of the needy and ingenious projector. He did not, however, whilst thus providing

instruments of melody for others, forget himself; for whilst he wa practising the art of making fiddles, he was studying that of perform ing on them; and having finished one of superior workmanship, h kept it by him as a *chef-d'œuvre* to the day of his death. Upon thi violin the writer of these memoirs has heard the maker of it perform in a room hung round with pictures of his own painting; which i rather a singular coincidence of arts in the person of one man. Th tones of this instrument seemed to be extremely good, and there wa some light carved work that spread from the setting in of the nec over part of the back, very curiously executed.'

The violin, carefully preserved by the Romney family until 1894 was supposed to be one of the painter's own making; but the expert who examined it at Miss Romney's sale were of opinion that it was o Italian workmanship. It was, therefore, in all probability one whic he brought back with him to England in 1775, together with an inlai cabinet, and a few other Italian works of art.

The 'ingenious but unfortunate' Williamson, before he moved from Whitehaven to Dalton, had been, according to Hayley, a gentleman o some small fortune. He was devoted to the study of natural philosophy mechanics and alchemy, and had a certain gift for drawing, which gav the two friends another taste in common. Romney always spoke o him later in life with high appreciation. He was attracted, as wa natural in a boy, by his alchemistic pursuits, but had the good sense t abandon them when he perceived their futility. Williamson waste much time and money in an attempt to make gold. Indeed, it wa this fondness for dabbling in the 'black arts' that brought about th final ruin of his domestic happiness. The cumulative experiments o years were ruined, so the story runs, by the blowing up of his furnac at the most critical moment through the obstinacy of his wife, wh insisted that he should leave his laboratory in order to help her enter tain some visitors. This so enraged the gold-searcher that he then an there deserted her, and retired to Dalton and to watchmaking. 'Hi memorable history,' says the sentimental Hayley, 'Romney related t me with affectionate minuteness, not without shedding tears of grati tude, in describing his beneficial kindness; and tears of pity, for hi calamitous fate.'

This particular incident in Williamson's career made a lasting im pression on Romney, and, quite at the end of his life, he formed project, which came to nothing, of painting a series of pictures t illustrate the adventures of an alchemist in search of the philosopher'

stone, culminating, in the last scene, in a tremendous explosion, amid which the devil was to appear among the shattered crucibles, and all the glittering visions were to vanish in the smoke.

The artist's son, however, had no very high opinion of this philosopher's character, declaring that, though clever, he was a bad husband, and that after leaving his wife he lived at Dalton with another woman, by whom he had four children, and whom he married upon the death of the lady he had left behind in Whitehaven.

It is extremely improbable that this unfortunate example of matrimonial infelicity had any influence upon Romney's conduct at a later period of his life, though both Hayley and Sir Herbert Maxwell infer that it had some such effect. Everything points to the fact that Romney's desertion of his wife was gradual and quite unpremeditated.

IV

BY the time Romney had reached the age of twenty he was fully determined to become a painter, and as he had already given many signs of unusual talent, his parents came to the conclusion that it would be wrong to thwart him. Mrs. Gardner, who had seen how capable he was with his pencil, urged that this step should be taken; and among other friends who believed that the youth gave promise of exceptional powers, were Mr. Lewthwaite, of Broadgate, in Millom, a relative, and Mr. Wright, a cabinet-maker in Lancaster, to whom, Hayley says, Romney was sent, at some uncertain date, to learn the business. Wright was greatly struck by the young man's cleverness in drawing portraits of his fellow-workmen, and told Robinson, of Windermere, who afterwards became Romney's pupil, that he had done his best to persuade John Romney to abandon the idea of bringing up his son to his own trade. These various counsels prevailed, and it was finally decided that George should become a portrait-painter.

The only artist then in the immediate district was a certain Christopher Steele, a travelling portrait painter, who, at the time young Romney's future fortunes were under family discussion, was at work in Kendal. He was a native of Egremont, in Cumberland, and had received some training in art from Richard Wright,[1] a marine painter, of Liverpool, followed by a year's study in Paris in the studio of the fashionable portrait painter Carle van Loo. To this artist George Romney was apprenticed for four years, for the sum of £21, his indenture being dated March 20th, 1755.

Steele was only a year or two older than his apprentice, and in character was in no way a suitable mentor and guide for an impressionable youth. He had brought back with him from abroad a colourable imitation of the fashionable airs and graces of the Parisians, and his manners, in consequence, gained for him from the stay-at-home, staid dalesfolk the nickname of 'Count.' He was a true Bohemian, idle

[1] This cannot have been Richard Wright, the marine painter, known as 'Wright of the Isle of Man,' who was born in Liverpool in 1735, and died about 1775.

when possible, gay and irresponsible, gaining a precarious living by painting portraits at a few guineas a head; constantly in debt, and, when his liabilities became too pressing, flitting away to some fresh field, where his engaging manners and attractive appearance, coupled with his modest fees, soon brought him fresh sitters. His happy-go-lucky disposition and extravagant tastes must have astonished his young pupil, whose upbringing had been conducted on much more strict and sober lines. His portraits are quite unknown to-day, but he was far from being the 'itinerant dawber' Richard Cumberland styled him. According to a friend of Hayley's, his pictures 'discovered sound principles of art,' while Romney himself found him 'eccentric in his talents and character, but far from wanting attractions, either as an artist or a companion,' and considered that his portraits were as good as anything Hudson painted.

The apprenticeship was, at first, not altogether to Romney's liking. It took him some time to accustom himself to the habits of his master, and, desirous above all things of making rapid strides in the practice of the art to which he was already so devoted, he found it not a little galling to be set tasks which he regarded as menial. Steele employed him upon a variety of odd jobs, such as the grinding of colours, and the carving of frames, and kindred drudgeries of the studio. Such work, however, was regarded as part of the training of a pupil, and there is little doubt that the technical knowledge of the preparation and mixing of colours he gained in this way was of very real service to him afterwards, and was one of the reasons why so many of his pictures still retain their original freshness of colour almost entirely unimpaired.

In spite of such tasks, Steele imparted to him by degrees all the knowledge of painting that he himself possessed, though John Romney insinuates, somewhat unkindly, that he did this more with the purpose of serving his own ends, by training his pupil until he had skill enough to complete his own unfinished work, than from any sense of duty or appreciation of his responsibility as a master; but he is forced to allow that the instruction thus given was of real service to Romney, and that there was 'even in his earliest productions, a singular clearness and sweetness of tone in the colouring, far beyond what might have been expected from so young an artist.'

Some little time after Romney joined him, the dashing 'Count' was more occupied with love-making than with art. He became enamoured of a young lady of Kendal, attracted by her charms or by

her fortune, or an irresistible combination of the two. Her relations, not unnaturally, took the strongest exception to these pretensions on the part of a wandering painter; but Steele, with his fascinating manners, was able to persuade her to banish all scruples and to run away with him to Gretna Green. History does not relate whether they were pursued by an irate father in the approved eighteenth-century fashion; in any case the couple reached their destination in safety, and were duly married. Throughout this intrigue Romney was employed in the not very honourable service of a go-between, carrying messages and notes, and helping in the arrangements for the final flight to the north.

So lightly did Steele regard the duties he had bound himself to fulfil, that he did not scruple to leave his young apprentice behind, for the purpose of doing what he could to appease both justly incensed guardians and angry creditors, and to finish any portraits that might be in hand.

Romney, no doubt, came in for more than his fair share of blame and abuse, and, according to Hayley, this so troubled him that he fell into a violent fever, which nearly proved fatal; but was nursed back to life by the devoted care of the daughter of his landlady. The natural consequences resulted, and the young couple fell in love with one another, Romney finding his master's example infectious.

The son's account of this, the first step in the domestic tragedy of the painter's life, differs somewhat materially from Hayley's version. He mentions no illness, but infers that Romney, then at a most impressionable age, was gradually attracted by one with whom he came into daily contact, and that this feeling in time deepened into love. This, though less romantic, seems to have been the more likely course of events. In any case, they became betrothed.

They were of the same rank in life. Mary Abbot, whose father had died when she was a child, leaving a wife and two small daughters in very straitened circumstances, came of a respectable Kendal family. She was seven years older than Romney, being twenty-eight when he married her, while he himself had only recently come of age. She was not a beautiful woman, if one may judge from the only two portraits of her in existence, both very early examples of her husband's skill. One of them, of which an illustration is given in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, was exhibited at the rooms of the Fine Art Society in 1905, and the other is reproduced here.[1] Both portraits

[1] See Plate 1.

remained in the possession of the artist's family for many years, and one of them was included in Miss Romney's sale in 1894. The former is the more attractive looking of the two, and is good and pure in colouring; the face, which is a sad one, is rather heavy and unintellectual; the latter, which is earlier in point of date, is less pleasing in expression, but is of extreme interest as an example of Romney's methods of portrait-painting at the very beginning of his career. It was once in the possession of Mr. Walter Sichel, the biographer of Lady Hamilton, and was purchased at Christie's by Messrs. Shepherd Bros. a few years ago. Though not beautiful in features, she was graceful in figure, and the vivid imagination of the young painter endowed her with charms which, perhaps, faded too quickly after marriage.

Her son describes her by saying that 'she excelled more in symmetry of form than in regularity of features; yet in this latter particular she was far from deficient.' She was a good and worthy woman, and what little is known of her points to unusual qualities of character and disposition. She had been trained by her mother upon strict principles of morality and religion. Certainly she possessed a patience far greater than that of most human beings, and a loyalty and unselfishness beyond all praise.

Shortly after the betrothal Steele, wisely considering that the air of Kendal would not agree with him until his escapades had been at least partly forgotten and forgiven, sent for Romney to join him in York. This peremptory summons greatly agitated the young lovers. The idea of an immediate parting seemed almost unbearable, as there was little prospect of meeting again for a considerable time, perhaps for some years; so with the impetuosity of youth, they solved the difficulty by quietly getting married.

This most foolish step—for foolish it was, as Romney had not the smallest means wherewith to keep a wife, and no immediate prospects of an income, however small—was taken on October 14th, 1756, a few days before he started to join the 'Count.' Whether Mrs. Abbot was consulted or not, his parents at Upper Cocken were kept in ignorance until the two were man and wife, and were naturally extremely angry at so rash and precipitate a step, which they regarded with much truth as a serious impediment to their son's success in a career for which he had as yet received but a scanty training, and knowing full well that upon them would fall the duty of providing for the new household. Romney, with a certain amount of reason on his side, excused himself

by protesting that his marriage would keep him out of mischief, and would cause him to concentrate himself upon his work, by giving him a double reason for making haste to become a good painter. 'If you consider everything deliberately,' he wrote, somewhat sententiously, to his father, 'you will find it to be the best affair that ever happened to me; because, if I have fortune, I shall make a better painter than I should otherwise have done; as it will be a spur to my application: and my thoughts being now still, and not obstructed by youthful follies, I can practise with more diligence and success than ever.' What reply he received to this epistle, which probably seemed quite unconvincing to his parents, is not recorded, nor can we now learn whether he was soon forgiven, or remained more or less in disgrace for some little time.

Whatever his father might think of the unwisdom of such a course, Romney's own son fully approved both the act and the arguments. 'I have no doubt myself,' he says, 'but it was highly advantageous to his professional pursuits, and contributed essentially to his future excellence. His affections and feelings being thus gratified and his mind at ease, he devoted himself to his art with the most determined industry.'

Master and pupil remained in York for the greater part of a year. Romney worked very hard, and made considerable progress, while Steele, now safely married and for a time unharassed by creditors, and less occupied in devising schemes for the hoodwinking of bailiffs, made a serious attempt to carry out his contract and to teach the young apprentice all he knew. The most notable personage who sat to the 'Count' in York was Laurence Sterne, then vicar of Sutton-on-the-Forest, and not yet famous as the author of *Tristram Shandy*, of which the first two volumes were written in 1759 and published in the January of the following year. He is said to have taken some interest in Romney, though there is no record that the latter attempted to paint the great man's portrait.

Cumberland, in the memoir of the painter he contributed to the *European Magazine*, in the writing of which his imagination was allowed freer play than was consistent with accurate biographical truth, says: 'Laurence Sterne was then living in York, and having seen some paintings of the apprentice very different from those of the master, immediately pronounced upon their merit, and took the rising artist decidedly into his favour and protection. The praise bestowed by Sterne was a passport that laid open all the barriers that might else

have retarded our adventurer in his efforts, and lifted him into notice and celebrity at once. There were now found numbers that echoed the opinion of Sterne, and prognosticated, at second hand, from example, what he had originally discovered from intuition. A preference so marked soon roused the jealousy of Count Steele, and, in place of lessons, altercations now ensued between the master and his apprentice, and ultimately created such a disagreement that they proceeded to separation.' There is little truth in this statement. At the time when Sterne was visiting the studio for the purpose of his portrait, Steele must have been much the better painter of the two, and the work of his pupil would receive but little consideration from sitters. Sterne, no doubt, showed him some kindly recognition, but that 'he lifted him into notice and celebrity' is quite untrue. Some years were still to elapse before the young painter was to emerge from obscurity and become known by name even in the restricted district in the north of England through which he went backwards and forwards painting portraits for a few guineas apiece.

Romney, however hard he worked, was dependent upon Steele for lodging, dress, and pocket-money; but his affectionate wife, who remained with her mother, undergoing on the very threshold of her married life her first experience of that enforced absence from her husband which was to be her lot for nearly forty years, managed to send him, out of her modest savings, an occasional half-guinea, hidden within the seal of her letters. This enabled him to buy prints, which at this time he was in the habit of copying in oils in his spare moments, and to eke out what must have been a somewhat irregular allowance from his master, who was more fond of borrowing than giving.

From York, Steele returned to Kendal, leaving Romney behind for a few weeks to finish certain portraits, collect the money for them, and to settle with various creditors before following him. Their stay in Kendal, however, was of short duration, and a move was made to Lancaster some time during 1757. Here, also, commissions were very scarce, and the restless Steele suggested that they should go further afield, and try Ireland as a portrait-painting ground. Romney, with a young wife in Kendal, with whom as yet he had spent but a few days, was naturally most strongly opposed to such a voyage. By this time, too, brought up as he had been in a quiet, God-fearing, hard-working household, he had grown weary of the gay, irresponsible manners and habits of the 'Count,' and the roving, homeless life, with its continual moving from one place to another; and the shifty dodges to make

both ends meet, and to pacify angry creditors, had become hateful to him. He had, too, with his habits of hard work, already learnt all that Steele could teach him about painting; so that, all things considered, he felt that this projected visit to Dublin was an excellent opportunity for a final parting.

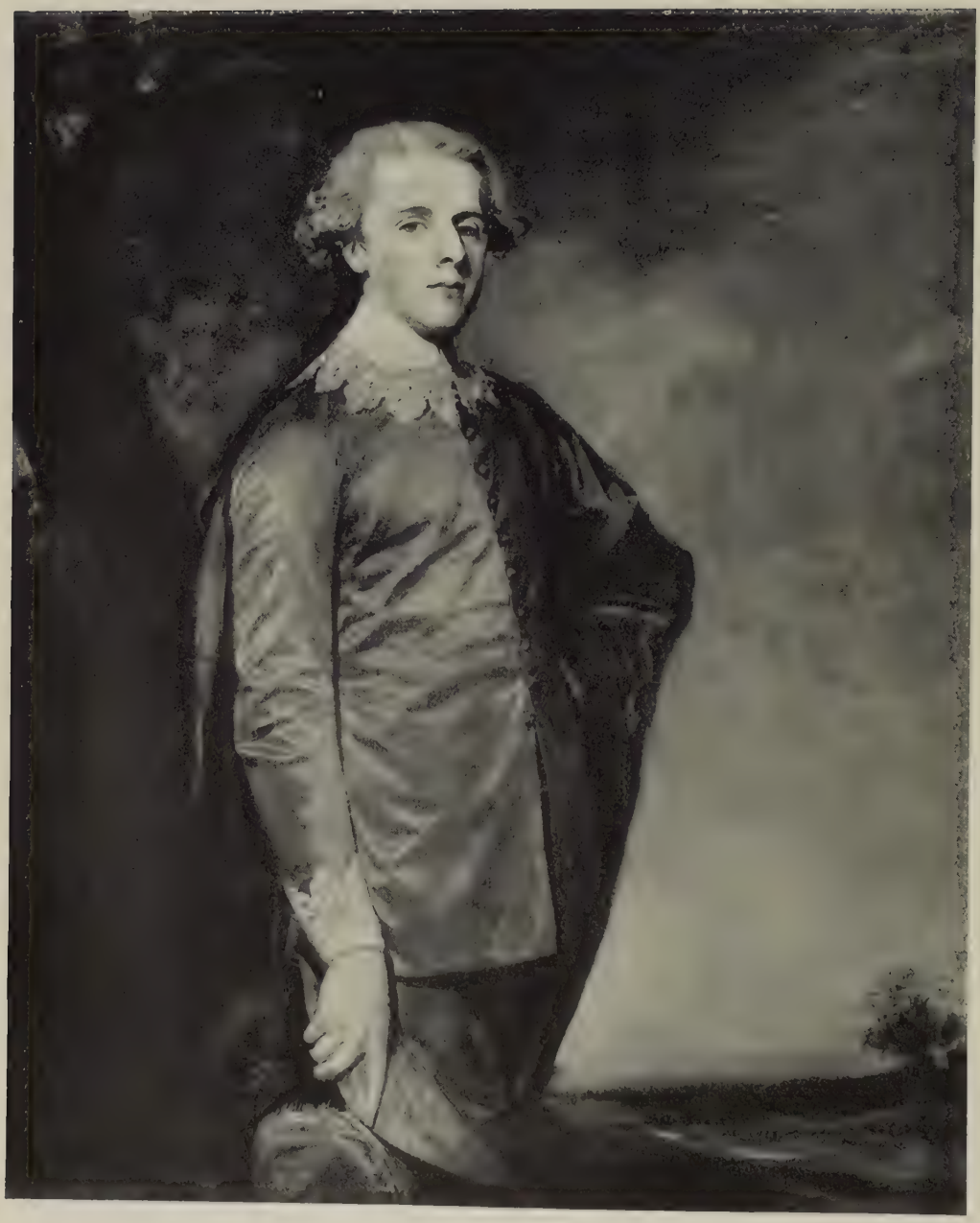
Although his indenture had still two years to run, he suggested that it should be cancelled, offering in exchange to forgive a debt of some £10 which he had lent to Steele in small amounts from time to time. The older man was by no means averse to this arrangement, finding that an apprentice, however useful he might be in the finishing of neglected work, was expensive to clothe and feed when clients were scarce. They parted company, therefore, in the most friendly spirit, and Romney was left behind, his own master, to seek his fortunes as a painter as best he could, after a short two years' apprenticeship to the craft, which was the only practical instruction he ever obtained.

It is not recorded whether he consulted his father before so abruptly terminating the period of his pupilage, but, judging from his independent action with regard to his marriage, it is probable that he decided matters for himself. In any case, the household at Upper Cocken must have looked upon this step with misgivings as grave as those with which they had regarded his rash matrimonial venture.

THE STAFFORD FAMILY ("CHILDREN DANCING IN A RING")

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND, K.G.

Pages 90, 292-3



THE MARQUIS OF STAFFORD

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND, K.G.

Pages 90, 293, 334

V

AFTER leaving Steele in 1757, Romney rejoined his wife in Kendal, where his only son, John, was born on April 6th in that year, and began his independent career as a professional painter; and Kendal remained his headquarters for the next few years, though he paid visits from time to time to Lancaster and other towns in the district in his search for work.

According to information given by Colonel Romney to Hayley, shortly after leaving Steele he spent the better part of a year in Lancaster, where he became intimate with Adam Walker, the philosopher and schoolmaster. 'For my own part,' Walker wrote to Hayley, 'I entertained at that time such a deference for his taste and opinions, that I founded my own upon them, and we became inseparable. Being invited to Lancaster, where he took many portraits, we lodged in the same house, where I was often his layman, while he painted the death of Le Fevre, Dr. Slop with Obadiah, King Lear with Cordelia, and several others.' This letter proves Colonel Romney to have been misinformed, for *Tristram Shandy* was not published until January, 1760, when it achieved an immediate and rather scandalous success in York, even sooner than in London, so that Romney's long visit to Lancaster must have taken place several years after he so abruptly terminated his apprenticeship, probably in 1760 or 1761.

Adam Walker, who was Romney's senior by a year or two, was born at Patterdale, Westmorland, in 1730 or 1731. He was the son of a woollen manufacturer, and though taken from school before he could read properly, succeeded in giving himself a good education. At an early age he displayed great ingenuity in the construction of working models of machinery. When fifteen he became usher at a school in Ledsham, Yorkshire, and three years later was writing and arithmetic master at the Free School in Macclesfield. Later on he travelled about the country lecturing on astronomy and natural philosophy, after keeping a school of his own in Manchester for a short

time. On the persuasion of Dr. Priestley he went to London in 1778, and lectured in the Haymarket, with such success that he took a house in George Street, Hanover Square, lecturing every winter in town, and also at Eton, Westminster, Winchester, and other public schools. He developed an inventive turn of mind, something like that of Romney's father, and perfected various mechanical devices, such as engines for raising water, carriages to go by wind and steam, a machine for watering land, and a dibbling plough. He also planned the rotary lights for the St. Agnes lighthouse in the Scilly Islands, which were fixed under his personal superintendence in 1790. In 1772 he took out a patent for an improved harpsichord, called the 'Coelestina'; but perhaps his best-known invention was the 'Eidouranion' or transparent orrery which he used for the illustration of his astronomical lectures. He retained most cordial relationships with Romney throughout the latter's life, and died at Richmond in 1821.

At the outset Romney had to struggle hard to gain even a decent livelihood. Commissions were far from plentiful, and the fees he was obliged to ask were ridiculously low, even for those days, while appearances had to some extent to be kept up; so that, however modest the desires, and however small the household expenses of the young couple, they must, at times, have found life more than a little difficult. They took up their abode, no doubt, with Mrs. Romney's mother, and probably received occasional help from Upper Cocken. According to the painter's son, Romney was much respected in Kendal, and obtained a fair amount of employment from people who were interested in him, and had confidence in his future success. His charges were only two guineas for a 'three-quarters' portrait (30 in. × 25 in.), and six for a small full-length of kit-cat size. His first commission was a very modest one—he painted on a board a hand holding a letter, as a sign for the postmaster of Kendal, which remained in its original position for many years.

He found, happily, a good friend in Mr. Walter Strickland, of Sizergh, the representative of one of the oldest families in the north of England. Among the first portraits he undertook were two half-lengths of this gentleman and his wife. He often visited Sizergh, and made copies of several of the family portraits, including one of Sir William Strickland by Lely, and others, by Rigaud, of an admiral and a bishop of Namur, French ancestors of the family. Until he went to London, these were almost the only pictures by the old masters he had a good opportunity of studying, and this opportunity

must have been not only a delight but of great advantage to him.

He painted other members of this family, including a small full length of Mr. Charles Strickland, who succeeded his brother, seated out of doors, fishing-rod in hand, by a waterfall called the Force, on the river Kent; and a companion portrait of the Rev. William Strickland, in his study, and a three-quarter length of the latter's wife, both done just before he left the north for London. All these portraits are still at Sizergh. Among the small full-lengths of this period are two which his son specially mentions on account of the excellent painting of the dogs which he introduced into them. One was of Mr. Jacob Morland, of Capplethwaite, in shooting-dress, with his favourite pointer, which is now in the National Gallery; the other of Colonel George Wilson, of Abbot Hall, Kendal, leaning against a rock, with three spaniels, which is still in the possession of the Wilson family at Dallam Tower.

Colonel Wilson, who was son of Daniel Wilson, M.P., of Dallam Tower, was, like Mr. Strickland, a good friend to the young painter. He saw that there were possibilities of a brilliant future before him, and so took a personal interest in his career. A small full-length portrait, said to be of the Colonel, and of about the same date as the one just mentioned, in sporting costume, was sold at Messrs. Christie's on July 18th, 1896, in which he is represented in a blue dress with a fishing-rod, standing by the falls on the river Kent. This description resembles so closely that of the portrait of Charles Strickland, that there seems a possibility of a mistake on the part of John Romney, who may have confused two different sitters. Romney also painted the Colonel's wife and daughter, the very beautiful picture now in Lathom House, one of the finest and most 'classical' canvases which he produced in the first years after his return from Italy (see Plate XXVII.).[1]

Two other Wilson portraits by Romney at Dallam Tower represent the Rev. Daniel Wilson, of Lancaster, in clerical dress, painted in 1767, when the artist revisited the north for a short time, and Mrs. Wilson, 'a very pleasing picture, and sweetly coloured: it was painted about 1784, when he had acquired his best manner.'[2] He painted another member of this family in 1764, Mr. James Wilson, in a red dress with a white stock and cuffs, leaning with

[1] Peter Romney also drew the portraits of Colonel and Mrs. Wilson in crayons in 1774.

[2] John Romney, p. 20.

his left elbow on a statue, and a distant landscape on the right, on a canvas 44 in. × 54½ in. It was sold at Messrs. Christie's on May 7th, 1905, as the property of Captain Braithwaite, the original receipt going with the picture.

A portrait which was executed under difficult conditions was that of the Rev. Dr. Simonds, vicar of Kendal, whose wife was very anxious to have his likeness; but the reverend gentleman refused to sit, so that Romney was obliged to sketch him furtively in church, and then paint the portrait from these hasty notes and from memory.

He had still more worry over the portrait of the Rev. Dr. Bateman, head-master of Sedbergh School, who was quite willing to be painted, but was less inclined to pay the modest fee of two guineas asked in return. Dr. Bateman did not approve of it as a likeness, and expected Romney to make some alterations in it. When the painter returned to Kendal in 1765, after three years' absence in London, he tried once more to get his hardly-earned money; whereupon the learned doctor wrote him a singularly offensive letter, in which he accused him of breaking his promise to paint the portrait over again, threatening a 'publick exposition,' and declaring that the offending artist should see his 'behaviour painted in one of the publick papers' for his most flagrant and scandalous breach of faith. This bombastic and abusive effusion, too long to quote in its entirety, did not intimidate Romney, who sent him a lawyer's letter, which soon brought the irate pedagogue to reason.

Certain of his works of this period still remain in the Kendal district, such as the Strickland portraits, already mentioned, while Mr. H. Arnold, of Arnbarrow, has in his possession two or three of the 'lottery' pictures about to be described. Four early examples now hang in the Kendal Town Hall, one of which, the portrait of Alderman Wilson, has the original bill for eight guineas attached to it, with the receipt signed by Peter Romney, 'for George Romney, Esq.,' dated July 17, 1764. There is also a fifth portrait, painted more than twenty years later, of Sir John Wilson in his judge's wig and robes, which was presented to the Corporation of Kendal in 1871 by Admiral Wilson, of the How, Applethwaite. This was engraved in mezzotint by John Murphy in 1792.

During the five years Romney spent in Kendal and the neighbouring district commissions were not numerous enough to oblige him to devote his whole time to portrait-painting. In his spare hours he

executed a number of original subject-pictures, and copied in oils various old prints, Dutch landscapes, tavern scenes, and the like, which he had collected. Finding that these productions remained upon his hands, he devised a scheme of a public lottery in order to dispose of them, chiefly with the idea, says Hayley, of raising enough money to visit London. He got together twenty pictures, of which only eight were original compositions of his own, the others being 'from designs of eminent masters,' and eighty-two tickets were issued at the price of half a guinea, the prizes being exhibited in the Kendal Town Hall for a week before the drawing.

The most important of the original pictures were two scenes from *King Lear*, each 4 ft. 4 in. × 3 ft. 6 in., and valued by the artist at eight guineas each, representing 'King Lear awakened by his daughter Cordelia,' and 'King Lear in the tempest tearing off his robes.' At the time Hayley was writing his life of the artist both pictures belonged to Adam Walker. The former, which was No. 1 on the prize list, was won by a Mr. Richardson, of Cartmel. Walker sat for it, and the Cordelia was painted from the artist's wife. Many years later one of Walker's sons saw it in a shop in Kensington, and, as it attracted his fancy, purchased it, although he had no idea who had painted it, or that his father had sat for one of the figures. On bringing it home Adam Walker recognised it as an old friend. The second 'Lear' subject was won by a Mrs. Robinson, housekeeper to Captain Wilson, of Bardsea Hall. According to John Romney, this picture, a torchlight effect, was his father's first effort in historical painting; and it is a curious fact that the same scene in the play was the subject of the last picture he attempted, for in 1798, when his powers had almost completely failed, he began another version of it, his pupil, Isaac Pocock, sitting for the head of 'Edgar.' At a later date the early 'King Lear' came into the possession of Mr. Braddyll, of Conishead Priory, now the well-known hydropathic establishment on Morecambe Bay. Many years afterwards Romney painted fine full-length portraits of Colonel Braddyll with a horse,[1] and of his wife, the lady whose beautiful portrait by Sir Joshua is in the Wallace Collection. The Braddylls were cousins of the Gales, of which family Romney also painted several members.

Next on the list was a 'Landscape with Figures,' of almost the same size as the preceding, which Romney modestly priced at four guineas. It represented a scene on Windermere, with a party of three

[1] The horse is said to have been painted by Gilpin.

ladies and two gentlemen embarking in a small boat, and was a recollection of an excursion made to Bowness by the artist and his wife, with Adam Walker and some other friends. It was won by Miss Gibson, of Lancaster. When Romney went back to the north, in 1798, and was looking out for a house, he and his son discovered this picture in one of the rooms of a mansion belonging to a Mr. Gibson, a relation of the original owner; and later on John Romney purchased it. He thus describes it:—'The figures reminded me of Watteau's familiar and elegant compositions. The colouring is beautifully clear and as fresh as if recently painted. The execution evinces great facility and freedom of handling; and the touches are spirited and neat, far, very far, beyond what might have been expected from so young and unexperienced an artist. The landscape, also, shews that he would have excelled in that branch of the art, had he made it his particular study.'

No. 5 on the lottery list, 'A Shandean Piece,' 2 ft. 6 in. × 2 ft. 2 in., valued at £3, was one of several small compositions painted from *Tristram Shandy*. It was once in the possession of Sir Allan Chambre, to whom it had been given by the winner. 'It represents Dr. Slop, all splashed and bedaubed with dirt, ushered into the parlour by Obadiah, where Walter Shandy and Toby were discoursing on the nature of woman, but whose attention was immediately arrested by the woful and grotesque appearance of the doctor.'[1] It was engraved for Hayley's book by W. Haines, and the engraving is also reproduced by Sir Herbert Maxwell. It was 'justly regarded as a work of great comic power,' says Hayley; and Cumberland, who also had seen it, was of opinion that 'the several characters are so admirably conceived, and executed with such comic force and spirit, that it is well worthy an engraving; and without considering it as the work of a man who had seen so little, it is in itself a composition that would do honour to the genius of an established artist.'

Another Sterne subject—said to be Romney's own favourite among them—was 'Obadiah making his bow to Dr. Slop as the doctor is falling in the dirty lane'; while a third represented 'The Death of Le Fevre.' The latter was among the pictures taken by the artist to London. Adam Walker, as already stated, sat as a model for all the Shandean works, as well as for other pictures, which were painted in Lancaster, where Romney spent the better part of a year, in the same lodgings as his friend, busily engaged in painting portraits, Mrs. Romney remaining behind in Kendal. Walker's own portrait, together

[1] John Romney, page 29.

with the members of his family, was painted again by Romney towards the end of his life. Walker told Hayley that the 'Le Fevre' picture 'was much admired. The figures were about eighteen inches long, and wonderfully expressive. The dying lieutenant was looking at Uncle Toby (who sat mute at the foot of the bed), and by the motion of his hand was recommending his son to his care. The boy was kneeling by the bedside, and with eyes that expressed the anguish of his heart was, as it were, turning from a dying to a living father, begging protection, a most pathetic figure. Trim was standing at a distance in his usual attitude, and with a face full of inward grief. What became of this admirable picture I cannot tell.' Romney's friends regarded this work as a 'masterpiece of pathetic expression,' Daniel Braithwaite thinking it to be 'the most affecting picture he ever beheld.'

Out of the eight original compositions included in the lottery John Romney was only able to trace the four already mentioned. The remaining ones were No. 4, 'A Quarrel' (2 ft. 11 in. × 2 ft. 3 in., £3, 10s.); No. 6, 'A Droll Scene in an Ale House' (2 ft. 2 in. × 2 ft. 1 in., £2, 10s.); No. 11, 'A Group of Heads by Candlelight' (2 ft. × 1 ft. 4 in., £1, 5s.); and No. 18, 'A Tooth Drawing by Candlelight' (1 ft. × 10 in., 10s.). All four of these were, no doubt, based upon his studies of Dutch prints. At this period Romney was rather fond of experimenting in candlelight effects. He painted the portrait of his brother James, at the age of sixteen, holding a candle in one hand, and shading the light with the other. His son possessed a copy of the 'Tooth Drawing' made by Peter Romney. The remaining prizes were copies of landscapes after Poussin, Berghem, Wouwerman, and others not named; a view of Colebrook Dale; other landscapes with houses, people fishing, etc.; a harvest scene; a Dutch house with figures; a rocky scene; and the Magdalen, a St. Cecilia, and the Holy Family.

Two small canvases, with the heads of Lear and Cordelia, studies for the first prize in the lottery, came into the possession of Mr. Matthew Whittaker, of Kendal. Romney was going to throw them into the fire, but his friend begged hard, and saved them from the flames. 'They were coloured in so clear and beautiful a tone,' says John Romney, 'that it became a matter of astonishment to me how he could have attained to such excellence in so short a time.' This Whittaker, who played on the German flute, formed one of the small group of musical enthusiasts, among whom was Walker, who met at regular intervals at Romney's lodgings.

The number of portraits he painted during the year or two preceding his departure for London was considerable. His prices at this time continued to be two guineas for a head and shoulders, and six for a whole length of kitcat size. These charges, contemptible as they were even for those days, were regarded by some of his clients as too high. His son mentions one of them who, after giving him a commission to paint the portrait of an old friend, refused to pay for it on the plea that he did not see the work finished, and only did so some years later, after he had gathered from others that the artist's work might some day prove valuable.

With fees as low as this, it was necessary, if he were to maintain his family decently, to paint as many portraits as possible, and so he gradually acquired a rapidity of handling, rarely surpassed by any other painter, which, later on, enabled him to receive many more sitters in his London studio than either of his two great rivals.

In 1759, his brother Peter, nine years his junior, joined him at Kendal, and studied under him for the next three years. In 1760 his second child, a daughter, was born, but she only lived for three years, dying about twelve months after her father had moved to London. The disconsolate mother then left Kendal, and went to reside with her father-in-law until his death.

Throughout the whole of this time Romney's ambition to become a great painter kept his thoughts constantly turned towards London as the goal to be attained for the full practice of his art. Only there could he find adequate opportunities for study and improvement in painting. He was conscious that he had it in him to accomplish much greater things, if only the chance were given to him of making acquaintance with some of the masterpieces of the great painters who had gone before him, and of testing his own performances by the side of those of the leading artists of his own day.

In the narrow provincial circles in which he moved, where art was little regarded for its own sake, and a limner of portraits was looked upon by most people as little better than a house-painter, he had small opportunity of making rapid strides towards that perfection which was always his aim even from the beginning; while there was every probability, if he remained permanently in the north, that he would become a mere hack-worker, such as his late master, and that his life would be one of perpetual drudgery, with little or no glory, and poverty always close at hand. It was only natural, then, that he should have gradually grown to look to London as the one ideal

place in which to make a brave attempt to capture both fame and fortune. Such a step, however, could not be taken without many months of anxious thought and the careful consideration of ways and means. Ambition conquered in the end, as it was bound to do with Romney, who was indifferent to almost everything but his art, and whose whole life was spent in the endeavour to make it more and more perfect. For a painter of the slenderest means, with others depending upon him, such a step was a most serious one, and it was possibly only after much inward agitation that he finally made up his mind to take the plunge. The question of money was the most serious of all. He managed, however, to put by a little out of his scanty fees, and with this and the amount he had gained by his lottery, he was able to scrape together a sum of about one hundred pounds. Thirty pounds of this fund he took for his own use, leaving the remainder for his wife and family, trusting that he would be able to send more before it was exhausted. There is not the slightest evidence that at this time he had any conscious intention of deserting his wife by taking such a step. He left the north for the purpose of seeking more remunerative work, and, in a still greater degree, to procure for himself those greater facilities for study and improvement which only the metropolis could offer; and he intended it to be a painting expedition such as those he was in the habit of paying to Lancaster or York, but of longer duration; though possibly, if London smiled upon him, and he made something of a reputation, he might hope to fix his permanent home there, in which his family could join him when his fortunes were more assured.

Romney set out from Kendal on March 14th, 1762. A journey to London was something of an adventure in those days. He travelled on horseback, in company with two friends. They stayed a night in Manchester, and here he fell in with his old master, Christopher Steele, as gay and debonair, and in just as many difficulties, as ever he had been. The next morning Steele rode with the travellers as far as Stockport, and from that moment he vanishes from Romney's life. Later in the same year Steele departed hurriedly for the West Indies, leaving the usual debts behind him. Romney being no longer at hand, it fell to Adam Walker to have the privilege of coping with the 'Count's' creditors and clients, and he sent Romney a very entertaining letter, dated December 12th, 1762, describing his exciting experiences in attempting to appease, if not to satisfy, a crowd of justly indignant people.

'The Count,' he wrote, 'now rides the vast Atlantic Ocean, and being quite tired out with the blindness and stupidity of the old, is going to try the discernment of the new world. He sailed from Liverpool a few days ago for the West Indies, having left Manchester in too abrupt a way to make an end of his affairs. Accordingly he put me into commission to collect his scattered goods and chattels; (an employ that I could very well have dispensed with;) and obliged his creditors, for the benefit of more things than their health, to take a ride out to Liverpool.

'I began my commission by buying three dozen of great and small corks for bottles of oil, etc., which had never known that convenience; but I had no sooner taken possession of the room, than it was filled with distressed damsels; some in want of a pair of stays, others of gauze handkerchiefs, ruffles, caps, dolls, etc., and many, no doubt, of their virtue. I obliged all as far as my things would go; but what were the lamentations when many were missing, and others so ornamented with oil, vermilion, etc., that the outrageous owners scarcely knew them again. But lo! the tremendous landlord of the vacant house comes in! "Nothing goes hence, sir, till I am indemnified for my lost keys, broken locks and windows, and those oiled places in my floors."—Dismay seized every damsel—"what not have my petticoat?" "not my gauze apron?" Oh Lord! "Nothing, young woman," replies the landlord. But, sir, I hope there is enough besides, and I have a commission to pay you.—"Very well, then you may take yourselves and trumpery away," quoth he to the afflicted—they did, and compounded for the stains and rents in their different garments with great exultation of heart. But ere the prints are half gathered from the floor, in comes a tribe.—"Sir, my bill is only five shillings and sixpence; mine only fifteen shillings; all charged at the very lowest. Sir, I must have my picture, he had a ring for it; though it 's like the rest, but half done. Sir, I understand you have a commission so-and-so. Sir, you know Mr. Steele and you and I have been very merry together, and it would be hard if the two guineas I lent——" Zounds! gentlemen, I have but four pound ten to pay twenty with—what the devil would you have me do? I 'll not pay a farthing of my own. "But, sir, you know a poor washerwoman gets her bread very hard." So do I.—I 'll positively throw up my commission. With great difficulty I got all together, and a laced suit from the pawn-broker's; and sent all off, except a landscape after Poussin, two war pieces, a night piece, and a Dutch one, all of your performance, which I saved from the

THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND, K.G.

Pages 90, 203

LADY HAMILTON WITH A DOG, OR "NATURE"

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

Pages 113, 313

general wreck by giving him two guineas for them. My picture is in the same state in which you saw it. I do not think this thoughtless fellow has done a week's work these six months; sometimes the weather, sometimes a girl, and sometimes the prospect of matrimonial emolument, has kept him from all manner of business, which might have kept him out of debt, and from that multitude of mortifications which continually attended him. . . . It was with inexpressible pleasure that I heard of your success in London, and I am sure it will increase. You have now, I dare say, laid aside all schemes of pastoral felicity, a reverie that I often indulge. . . . God bless you, write to me, and be particular. I know how much you hate writing, but mortify yourself for once, and add one more pleasure to the life of
Your most affectionate friend, A. WALKER'[1]

Romney and his companions, one of whom was a Mr. Holme, of Manchester, had a pleasant week's journey, though on one of the days they were considerably alarmed for the safety of their purses, for they were joined by a man, who, to their suspicious eyes, had every appearance of a highwayman. He rode with them for some distance, but finally came to the conclusion that the odds were too many for him, and so left them without attempting robbery. They reached London on March 21st without further adventure, and dismounted at the Castle Inn, where Romney remained for a fortnight while he looked about him for suitable lodgings.

[1] Quoted by John Romney, pp. 42-44.

VI

AT that time London, though the goal of all aspiring eighteenth century painters, was but poorly provided with facilities for the serious study of art when compared with the opportunities it offers to the student in the present day. When Romney came to town in 1762 almost the only place where it was possible to gain some kind of tuition, and that not of the best, was at the Academy in St. Martin's Lane, but he does not seem to have made any use of it; it was not until the Royal Academy was founded in 1768 that systematic instruction in the fine arts was attempted. The first effort to establish an academy or school for young artists in London was made by Sir Godfrey Kneller in 1711. He had then been thirty-seven years in England, and had become the most popular painter of his day. He had been knighted by William III., and made a baronet by George I., and, aided by numerous assistants, had amassed a large fortune by his brush. Several of the leading artists of the metropolis combined with him in forming a society on the lines of the Academy of France, but internal jealousies soon brought it to an end. Sir James Thornhill, who was at the head of one of the two parties into which the society had split, in his turn set up an Academy of his own in a room he had built for the purpose at the back of his house in Covent Garden. As historical painter to the king he had already tried without success to found a Royal Academy at the upper end of the King's Mews. To the school he instituted at his own house admission was by ticket; but, like its predecessor, it had only a short and not very successful life. Here again a party of secessionists, with Vanderbank at their head, started a rival academy of their own, with a female model to attract subscribing members, but in spite of this novelty, came to grief in their turn, mainly through want of funds.

On the death of Sir James Thornhill in 1734, an attempt was made to carry on his Academy, mainly through the efforts of his son-in-law, Hogarth. Some thirty or forty artists, among whom were a number

of foreigners, formed themselves into a body, and subscribed between them a sum sufficient for the renting of a large room and the provision of models. Hogarth, who had become the owner of the furniture and apparatus used by Sir James Thornhill, lent it to the new society, which, after starting in rooms in Grey Court, Arundel Street, soon moved to St. Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane. It was the first institution of its kind in London to obtain any adequate measure of success, and for some forty years it was the only school in which young artists could gain any training in the rudiments of their art; and here most of the leading painters of the reign of George III. received a certain amount of elementary instruction.

Outside this Academy in St. Martin's Lane there was little effort made to encourage native talent, or to discover hidden genius. George II. was entirely lacking in taste for the fine arts, and the patronage of the Court was but scantily extended to contemporary painters. Art, indeed, was at its lowest ebb, and with the exception of portraits, and the decoration of ceilings, walls, and staircases, there was little employment for the artist beyond the painting of sign-boards, such as were used by every business house, or the panels of coaches and carriages. The rich were occupied in collecting doubtful 'Old Masters,' and they usually went for their portraits to one or other of the numerous foreigners settled here, or had them painted abroad, when making the 'grand tour' in Italy. Rouquet, the enamel-painter, who lived in London for thirty years, wrote, as late as 1755, that the English amused themselves with the arts, without bestowing much consideration on the artists; that the portrait-painter was more dependent on the influence of powerful friends than on talent; that the artist who happened to be the favourite was constrained to work incessantly, because Fashion, having usurped the place of Reason, required that all the world should be painted by the same person; that the arts had so little influence among us, that the painter to the king alone enjoyed the protection of the crown; that all favourable consideration and lucrative situations were controlled by regard, direct or indirect, to political power; and that artists of talent, without the right of suffrage at elections, or without friends who had it, never gained anything. Certainly in the reign of George II., whatever genius there might be in England was little considered, and what small share of patronage was given to English-born painters usually fell to the worst of them. Such indifferent daubers as Kent, Shackleton, and Sir James Thornhill's son, succeeded one another in the post of painter to the

king; and it was not until 1757, when Hogarth received the appointment at the age of sixty, that a man of real distinction received royal recognition.

The first public attempt made in this country to help budding genius and to reward talent adequately, was the establishment in London, in 1754, of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, on the lines of one founded in Dublin some fourteen years previously. Mr. William Shipley, of Northampton, was the principal mover in the matter, for the scheme had been in his mind for some time. He interested Lord Folkestone, Lord Romney, and others in it, and it obtained an assured success from the first. Between the years 1754 and 1778 it distributed in bounties and premiums more than twenty-four thousand pounds, of which some sixteen thousand went to reward merit in science and the remainder to the fine arts. It gave gold and silver medals, and sums of varying amounts up to one hundred and forty pounds, and its annual distribution of prizes became 'a scene of great ceremony and display.' 'During many years,' says Pye,[1] 'most of the distinguished artists of London were, both in youth and manhood, indebted to this Society for the encouragement and countenance it conferred on them by its rewards; and it constitutes, perhaps, the first combined effort made amongst us to call into general exercise the inventive faculty of man, as a power necessary to the improvement of every branch of our manufactures.'

Reports of its meetings and its prizes were spread throughout the country by means of the newspaper, and Romney, no doubt, was aware of the substantial encouragement it offered to struggling painters, and would regard it as an added inducement to take him to London. Among the artists who, as young men, were successful in carrying off rewards, in addition to Romney himself, were Artaud, the painter of a number of striking portraits, including one of Dr. Priestley, Mortimer, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Landseer, the sculptors Nollekens, Banks, Bacon, and Flaxman, the engravers Finden, Schiavonetti, and Bewick, and the medallists Thomas and William Wyon.

In 1755, a year after the establishment of this Society, a serious attempt was made to found a Royal Academy of Arts, and among those signing the preliminary prospectus were Joshua Reynolds, his master Thomas Hudson, Thomas Sandby, Moser, Roubilliac, Sir Robert Strange, and Francis Hayman, Gainsborough's teacher, who was chair-

[1] *Patronage of British Art*, John Pye, 1845.

man. The Dilettanti Society gave them some assistance, but the usual disputes arose, and the project failed.

The next attempt had its origin as far back as the year 1740, when Hogarth presented his portrait of Captain Coram, its founder, to the Foundling Hospital, and, later on, his 'March to Finchley.' In 1745, when the west wing of the Hospital was finished, other artists came forward with gifts of pictures, among them being Hayman, Highmore, Hudson, Allan Ramsay, and Richard Wilson. These pictures, to which others were added from time to time, many of them being portraits of the patrons of the Institution, constituting, as they did, the first collection of British works of art to which the public had the right of admission, caused the Hospital to become a popular place of resort; and the artists, among whom were Reynolds and Gainsborough, gained in reputation in consequence of the great number of visitors. This suggested to the general body of artists the idea of an annual public exhibition of their pictures. A meeting was held at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, Soho, on November 12th, 1759, when it was resolved to hold such an exhibition every April, and that the money charged for admission should be used towards the support of those of their number, 'whose age and infirmities, or other lawful hindrances, prevent them from being any longer candidates for fame.'

They received permission for the exhibitions to be held in the great room of the Society of Arts, in the Strand, and to the first one, which opened on April 21st, 1760, sixty-nine painters, including Reynolds, Cotes, Cosway, and Paul Sandby, contributed pictures. In the following year, owing to difficulties with the Society, which, among other things, insisted that the exhibition should be free, the artists arranged with an auctioneer for the use of his room in Spring Gardens. Once again the usual dissensions arose, with the result that the members divided, and two annual exhibitions were held, the larger and more distinguished body remaining at Spring Gardens, under the title of the 'Society of Artists of Great Britain,' and the smaller section, which soon drew others into its fold, returning to the Society of Arts. The latter, in 1762, entitled themselves the 'Society of Artists associated for the Relief of distressed Brethren, their widows and orphans.' Such was the state of art in London when Romney came there in 1762.

The later history of these two Societies, with both of which he exhibited, may be hastily sketched in a few words. The Spring Gardens body received a Charter of Incorporation on January 26th,

1765, the number of members to be unlimited, and each to be designated 'Fellow.' The roll declaration of the 'Society of Incorporated Artists of Great Britain,' as they now called themselves, adopted in the following year, was signed by two hundred and eleven members, and among the signatures, which included those of Reynolds and Gainsborough, that of George Romney occurs sixth from the end of the list. In 1767 the question of a public Academy under Royal protection was under discussion among the members, and in this year they changed the name to 'Royal Academy,' but no patronage or money was forthcoming from the royal purse or person, and once again the Society was agitated by dissensions.

In the meanwhile the second Society had been legally enrolled in 1763 as the 'Free Society of Artists,' Romney being among the hundred members who signed the roll. In 1765 a move was made from the Society of Arts in the Strand to a big room in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, and in 1767 to another at the bottom of the Haymarket. It numbered one hundred members in 1768, in which year the present Royal Academy of Arts was founded.

This is not the place in which to discuss in detail the disputes which embittered the Incorporated Society, leading to the ejection of some members, and the resignation of others who had been the leaders in its government, and the final establishment of the Royal Academy, which sprang into existence on December 10th, 1768, with Reynolds, who had taken no public share in the quarrels, as its first President, and with the King as its active patron, owing largely to the persuasions of Benjamin West. The members of the Incorporated Society made a gallant struggle in opposition, and in 1772 built the Lyceum in the Strand at a cost of nearly eight thousand pounds, but the debt they incurred so greatly crippled them that they never recovered, and after 1775 held no regular exhibition, their very last appearance being in Spring Gardens in 1791. The Free Society, which in 1769 began to exhibit in a room expressly built for them by Mr. Christie, the auctioneer, next to Cumberland House, Pall Mall, also held their last exhibition of importance in 1775, reaching final collapse four years later; and from that time the Royal Academy reigned supreme.

VII

ROMNEY entered London full of hope and determination, but almost as a friendless stranger. With the exception of one or two north country acquaintances at that time settled in town, he knew few people who could be of much service to him. Among them was Daniel Braithwaite, for many years Comptroller of the foreign department of the General Post Office—he was Secretary to the Post-Master General in 1774 with a salary of £100—who, throughout his life, helped the painter in many ways. Braithwaite numbered many artists among his friends, and was one of the trustees of the marriage settlement of Angelica Kauffmann upon her union with A. Zucchi, and also one of the executors of her will, under which she bequeathed him £100. Boswell speaks of him as 'that amiable and friendly man, who, with modest and unassuming manners, had associated with many of the wits of the age.' Hayley dedicated his *Life of Romney* to him. 'To you, my dear sir,' he begins, 'whom Romney used to call his earliest patron in the metropolis, to you, whose kind exertions in his favor, and whose mild endearing manners I have heard him so frequently recall to his recollection with gratitude and delight, I feel irresistibly induced to inscribe the volume, in which I have endeavoured to honor his memory.' Romney gave him his unfinished portrait of Mrs. Siddons.

In a letter to his wife, dated March 30th, 1762, written from the Castle Inn, about a week after his arrival, he speaks of kindness shown to him by Mr. Rowland Stephenson, a banker, whose son's portrait he had already painted, and his wife, who was a daughter of Alderman Drinkell, of Kendal, and by Mr. Pennington, Mr. Walker, and other friends. In the same letter he tells her that his brother John has been with him every day, apparently for assistance which Romney could ill afford to give, but 'is going to work immediately, and has promised to stick close to it for the future'; and he asks her to forward him 'the pieces of King Lear, and Elfrida rolled up in a box,' with some other canvases, the titles of which are missing through the unfortunate tear-

ing of the letter. He adds, too, that he thinks he shall like London. But unused as he was to the ways and the bustle of a big city, he must have felt at first a little lost and forlorn; though, in spite of a natural anxiety as to the future, he was soon so hard at work, and so determined to do his utmost to make a position for himself, that he had little time for despondent thoughts. He was well aware that his success depended entirely upon his own individual exertions, and the rapidity with which he was able to improve himself in his art; for he had no noble patrons to sit to him and to induce others to come to his studio, and no acquaintances among the rich and fashionable society of the town.

His first lodgings were at Mr. Pantry's, a butcher, in Dove Court, near the Mansion House, where he immediately began to paint. His stock-in-trade consisted of a few portraits and pictures, such as the 'Elfrida' and one of his 'King Lear' subjects, and possibly the 'Death of Le Fevre.' He set to work at once upon a large composition representing the 'Death of David Rizzio.' Those who saw it, who, according to his son, were competent to judge, considered it to be 'a work of extraordinary merit, combining energetic action with strong expression.' Hayley says that Romney regarded it as the best of his youthful productions, and that 'its singular merit made a lasting impression on the memory of those who saw it, as the young artist was very successful in representing both the beauty and the compassionate tenderness of the Queen.' In spite of their praise it remained unsold on his hands, and was so much in the way in his small painting-room that before going to Paris, in 1764, he destroyed it, after cutting out some of the heads.

Early in August he moved to rooms in Bearbinder's Lane, where he painted his picture of 'The Death of General Wolfe.' At this period of his career he seems to have regarded 'death scenes' as subjects which offered him the best opportunities for acquiring success in the field of historical painting. He was also engaged upon several portraits, commissions which he obtained chiefly through the kind offices of his friend Daniel Braithwaite. One of these, a small family group, representing a gentleman in a brown dress, his wife in blue trimmed with fur, and a young daughter in pink, signed and dated 1763, was sold at Christie's on April 27th, 1902, for two hundred guineas.

In 1763 he again moved his lodgings, this time to rooms near the Mews Gate, Charing Cross, which were in a more central situation, and close to the Exhibition rooms in Spring Gardens, and to the Academy in St. Martin's Lane, though, as already pointed out, there is no

evidence to show that he ever studied in the latter. There was one place in London, however, where he worked with great advantage. The Duke of Richmond had built a statue-gallery in Privy Gardens which he threw open for the use of students in 1758, with Wilton, the sculptor, and Cipriani as directors. The gallery contained some thirty casts from antique statues and basso-rilievos, and here Romney was in the habit of copying. 'Premiums for merit were promised by the noble Duke,' says J. T. Smith; 'but in consequence of his Grace receiving orders to join his regiment immediately, there was no time for their distribution. Upon which, some of the students most shamefully posted up the following notice against the studio door:—"The Right Honourable the Duke of Richmond, being obliged to join his regiment abroad, will pay the premiums as soon as he comes home."

'This paper was very properly taken down, but, upon the Duke's return from Germany, his Grace found one stuck up, apologizing for his poverty, and expressing his sorrow for having promised premiums. For this most malicious conduct of the students concerned, his Grace, for a time, shut up the gallery, and some of the casts became the property of the Royal Academy, upon its establishment. The above account I received from my father, who was one of the many other students who suffered by the misconduct of his disorderly companions. The Duke's liberality was extolled by Hayley in his epistle to his friend Romney, who was one of the most constant and well-behaved students in his Grace's gallery.' The gallery was re-opened in 1770, and placed in charge of the Society of Artists. In addition to Cipriani and Wilton, Moser also taught there.

Romney painted several portraits of the Duke at different periods of his life, one of them early in 1776, shortly after his return from Italy, which was engraved in mezzotint by James Watson in 1778. Another portrait, possibly a version of the 1776 canvas, 30 in. × 25in., in which the Duke is shown, in a blue coat, seated under a tree, and reading a book, which was sold at Messrs. Christie's on December 12th, 1903, is now in the possession of Mr. C. Fairfax Murray. According to John Romney, the last portrait of his patron was painted in 1795. Romney appears to have made more than one replica of the earliest one for presentation to the Duke's friends.

In 1763 Romney sent in his picture of 'The Death of General Wolfe,' to compete for the premiums offered annually by the Society of Arts for historical painting. The accounts given as to what took place on this occasion show some material differences. The first prize

was awarded to Robert Edge Pine for his picture of 'Canute the Great reproving his Courtiers for their impious flattery,' and the second one of fifty guineas was adjudged to Romney. According to Cumberland, this decision was not reached without some dissension, 'as it was apprehended to be the production of an old artist, for some years retired into the country, and who was accordingly censured for what was considered as an attempt to impose on the Society.' This mistake, however, was soon cleared up, but further objections were made in some quarters to the award, partly, it is said, because the subject chosen by Romney was a modern one, unrecorded as yet by any historian, with the figures in the costume of the day; whereas it was the fashion at that time to consider no picture 'historical' unless conceived in the classical spirit and dressed in what was thought to be the appropriate costume of that remote period. 'Other criticisms, even more ridiculously minute and frivolous than the above, were offered against it,' continues Cumberland; 'as, that the Officers and Soldiers were not all in their proper regimentals, that Wolfe himself had on a handsome pair of silk stockings, against the costume of a General on the field of battle, and some objected to the deadly paleness of his countenance.'

In a short obituary notice of the artist which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1802, a notice which bristles with inaccuracies, it is stated that the picture 'was smuggled by his friends into an Exhibition; but the Committee decreed to it only the second prize, on account of the omission of *boots* on the general's legs; and the picture was instantly sold for a large sum.'

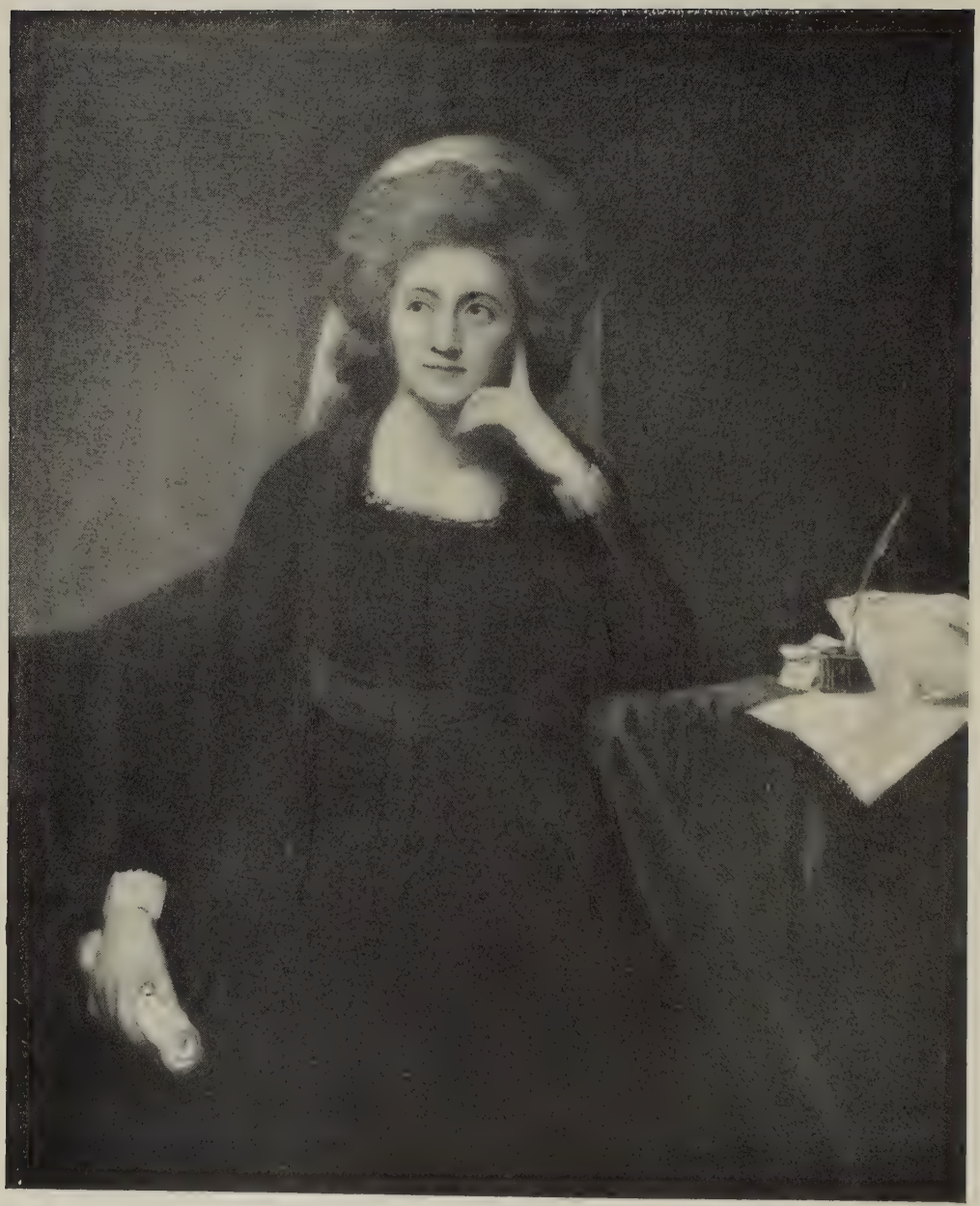
Whatever may have been the real reason, the committee's decision was rescinded, and the second premium given to John Hamilton Mortimer for his 'Edward the Confessor spoiling his Mother at Winchester,' while a special prize of twenty-five guineas was voted to Romney as a solatium, not, says his son, 'as a compensation for any disappointment he might have suffered, but as a recompence due to the merit of his picture.' In the catalogue of the Exhibition of the Free Society it is stated that 'to this picture was adjudged a bounty (twenty-five guineas) this present year.'

John Romney declares that the person to whose interference this reversal of opinion was due, was 'the illustrious Reynolds.' The indignant son, in his attempts to prove that Sir Joshua always hated Romney, and did his best to ruin him, scenting a serious rival from the very beginning, when the new-comer was almost unknown, launches

LADY HAMILTON AS A BACCHANTE

IN THE COLLEC TION OF MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

Pages 114, 204, 314



ANNA SEWARD

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. T. L. BURROWES

Pages 120, 153

forth into language of such violent exaggeration as to become merely ridiculous. 'Can he be regarded as an impartial judge?' he asks, speaking of Reynolds. 'He was too much versed in his profession, and had too shrewd an intellect not to perceive in the author of that picture a future rival. Let any one indeed look at the portraits painted by Mr. Romney at that time, and see whether there was not sufficient ground for jealousy on the part of Reynolds. . . . The following principle, laid down by Sir Joshua himself, and grounded upon his own feelings, establishes the truth of my observations, "that it was impossible for two painters in the same department of the art to continue long in friendship with each other."' After this, no doubt thinking he had gone a little too far, he suggests that Reynolds may have been influenced by a less personal reason—his friendship for Mortimer, an old pupil of his master Hudson, who was no portrait painter, and who afterwards gave proof of his gratitude by dedicating his etchings to the President. 'It was not to be tolerated, that a young man from the country of whom no one knew anything, should carry away the prize from a student of such high pretensions. . . . It may be mentioned, also, as an additional indication of jealous feeling on the part of Reynolds, that not the slightest intercourse, at any time, subsisted between him and Mr. Romney; this could not, at first, have arisen from any backwardness on the side of the latter, because the notice of so distinguished an individual would have been of great advantage to Mr. Romney; unless, as some say, he had felt himself aggrieved by the interference of Reynolds, in depriving him of the merited premium.'

John Romney, at the end of this somewhat absurd attack, is obliged to confess that his father never at any time mentioned the subject to him, but that he gathered the information from 'different persons at that time qualified to judge.'

His book, indeed, is marred throughout by a continual attempt to belittle Sir Joshua, and the conduct he imputes to him in this particular case would have been quite impossible to a man of so upright a character as Reynolds.

Richard Cumberland, in his brief memoir in *The European Magazine*, is almost equally emphatic. He wisely mentions no names, but every one at the time knew at whom his arrows were aimed. 'The decree was reversed,' he wrote, 'and poor Romney, friendless and unknown, was set aside in favour of a rival better supported; a hardship so obvious, and a partiality so glaring, that the Committee could not face the transaction, but voted him a premium extraordinary,

nearly, if not quite, to the amount of the prize he had been deprived of.'

Hayley's account of the business seems to be the most natural one, and the nearest to the truth. He received it from the artist himself, so that it should carry with it a certain amount of conviction. His version is as follows:—'The candid Romney, in relating this very interesting incident of his life to me, completely absolved those judges of the contest, who gave their final sentence against him. He told me, with that ingenuous spirit, which was one of his amiable characteristics, that Reynolds was the person who, with great justice, contended, that the second prize of 50 guineas was due to Mortimer for his picture, . . . a picture which Romney most liberally acknowledged to be so strikingly superior to his own death of Wolfe, that he was far from repining at being obliged to relinquish a prize too hastily assigned to him; and he therefore accepted with lively gratitude a present of twenty-five guineas, which the Committee gave him, not as a compensation for an injury received, but as a free and liberal encouragement to his promising talents.' It may be doubted whether Romney was entirely sincere in placing his own work so much below his rival's, for he gave the information to one who was already singled out as his future biographer; and so would naturally speak with a certain amount of cautious reserve; but there is no reason to believe that he thought Reynolds was actuated by anything but a sense of justice and an honest conviction as to which of the two was the better picture.

A short paragraph in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 11th, 1763, offers, perhaps, a still simpler explanation. It runs:—'The prize pictures were opened at the Society's office in the *Strand*; the subjects of which are as follows: *Canute* reproving the flattering courtiers; for this piece the painter has been adjudged the first prize of 100 guineas. The Death of Gen. *Wolfe*; this piece was put in competition for the first prize, but was adjudged inferior to the former in merit; and as it could not be admitted for the second prize, a compliment of five and twenty guineas was paid the painter as an encouragement to merit. *Caractacus* before the *Roman* Emperor *Claudius*, *Edward* the Black Prince introducing his prisoner, the *French* king, to his father *Edw. III.*, *Edward* the confessor plundering his mother of her effects; for this piece the author received the second premium of 50 guineas. There are besides ten landscapes; their merits not yet determined.'

This account is confusing; but it seems to point to the fact that the competition for historical painting was divided into two classes, one

with a prize of one hundred and the other with one of fifty guineas; and that those pictures which had not been successful in the first division were debarred from competing in the second. If this were so, then Romney had no cause for complaint against the Society for awarding the latter to Mortimer. It is difficult to see what other reason there could be for stating that the 'Death of General Wolfe' 'could not be admitted for the second prize.'

Mortimer was only twenty-two at the time, nearly seven years younger than Romney, and with this picture his reputation became firmly established. He had already made something of a name by decorating the panels of the King's state coach with battle scenes, which attracted the attention of the populace, and delighted the young monarch, who is said to have had the panel of the 'Battle of Agincourt' taken out and framed, and to have given some patronage to the painter. It is certainly not true to say, as John Romney does, that Mortimer painted no portraits, for he produced a number, but though clever at seizing a likeness his art lacked good colour, and so his attempts in this field were unprofitable. His subject pictures were marked by exaggeration of expression and movement, and a straining after muscular force. He was, like Cosway, one of the dandy painters, and in his earlier days preferred the bottle to the brush, being more anxious to be looked upon as a man about town and an athlete than an artist. He followed up his success of 1763 by winning, in the following year, the first prize of 100 guineas given by the Society with a picture of 'St. Paul preaching to the antient Druids in Britain.' Romney declined to enter into contest with him again. He was too busily engaged in painting portraits, his son says, to finish a second historical picture in time; but it is more likely that a man of Romney's character would not immediately recover from such a rebuff. The dispute and the talk it produced did the artist some good, as it brought his name prominently into notice, and drew greater attention to his undoubted abilities. The picture itself, which was included with the other prize-winning works in the Exhibition of the Free Society, together with 'A Scene in King Lear,' was purchased by his friend Mr. Rowland Stephenson, already mentioned, for twenty-five guineas, and presented by him to Governor Verelst, who placed it in the Council Chamber in Calcutta, so that its fate was an honourable one. It is no longer there, however, and its present whereabouts cannot be discovered.

This episode of Romney's early life in London has been given in some detail, because in spite of the artist's protest to the contrary, it

may well have been one of the causes of the strong antipathy which existed between the two men throughout their professional careers. Coupled with Romney's unsociable habits and indifference to the society of most of his fellow artists, it was very probably one of the first causes of that lack of sympathy between the two painters, which gradually deepened into rivalry, tempered by no outward signs of friendliness or even ordinary acquaintanceship.

In the spring of 1764 Romney had removed to James Street, Covent Garden, from which address he sent to the Exhibition of the Free Society the 'Portrait of a Young Lady,' and an unfinished version of 'Samson and Delilah.' He was by this time busily occupied with portrait-painting, and was making every effort to save enough money to enable him to pay at least a short visit to the Continent, in order that he might gain a wider knowledge of the work of the older masters than he had as yet had an opportunity of doing. He not only wanted this experience in order that he might improve his painting, and enlarge his ideas—and this desire to learn more and more of his art was undoubtedly the ruling passion of his life—but also for reasons of policy. It was at that time considered almost indispensable for a painter to visit Italy, or, if he could not go so far afield, one or other of the more easily accessible continental art centres, if he wished to be regarded as an artist of real accomplishment. There were exceptions, no doubt, but not many, the only painter of first importance who never had the advantage of foreign travel being Thomas Gainsborough. Sitters were apt to ask an artist where he had studied, and to think less highly of his work if he were obliged to confess he had seen none of the great Italian galleries. It was supposed to make, and no doubt it did, a considerable difference in the number of commissions received, and for this reason most painters made great efforts to scrape together enough money to carry them abroad for at least a year. Romney, his son tells us, 'felt himself humbled by this acknowledged defect, which compelled him to paint for lower prices, and to assume a tone of pretension far below his deserts.' He worked his hardest, therefore, with this object in view, but as some part of the modest fees he gained had to be sent to the north, and, in addition, his brothers were a source of expense to him on more than one occasion, it was some time before he had saved enough to allow him to pay a short visit to Paris. Italy was, for the present, quite out of his reach.

VIII

ROMNEY started for Paris early in September 1764, having for travelling companion Thomas Greene, a lawyer, of Gray's Inn, one of his oldest and closest friends, and his junior by three years. Their acquaintanceship was brought about, indirectly, by the Rebellion of 1745, in which year Greene's father moved his family from Slyne, near Lancaster, into Furness for safety, and sent his boy to the Dendron village school, where one of Romney's younger brothers was still boarding. He spent more than one week-end holiday at Upper Cocken with his schoolfellow, and became greatly attached to George, who was then working at his father's trade, and, according to Richard Cumberland, 'endeared himself to his young visitor by a variety of kind offices and attentions, calculated to win the open heart of a boy in whom all the principles of gratitude and affection were innate. Thus by the recommendation of a few childish toys, wrought by his own hand, the young mechanic laid the first foundation of a friendship in the heart of one of the best men living, who never failed to feel for him, and to serve him, through all the changes and chances of his various life; and now, after his decease, continues faithful and affectionate to his memory; studious, by every means, to deliver down his name with credit to posterity, and successful in all his exertions for the fame and honour of his departed friend. . . . Thus let the names of Romney and Greene descend together to succeeding ages; and so long as these memoirs shall survive, whilst they record the genius of the one, let them bear this testimony to the benevolence of the other.'

When Romney removed to London, Greene helped him in many ways, and acted as his professional adviser all his life. He was, according to Hayley, a 'careful attorney,' and 'universally regarded for chearful indulgent probity, and alert benevolence.' Romney painted his portrait several times, and also that of his sister. These are still in the possession of his descendant, Mr. H. Dawson-Greene, of Whittington Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale, together

with the large group of 'Flaxman modelling the Bust of Hayley,' and several other works by Romney. The earliest portrait of Greene is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book.

The two friends travelled by way of Dunkirk and Lille, and remained in Paris for some six weeks. Soon after their arrival Romney wrote to his brother Peter in a severely critical mood respecting modern French taste and art. He found that 'the degeneracy of taste that runs through every thing, is farther gone here than in London. The ridiculous and fantastical are the only points they seem to aim at. The paintings I have yet seen, are not much better, I mean by the present masters; but those of the time of Louis the fourteenth are very great, and every church and palace is filled with them.'

Every moment of their time was spent in studying pictures, and in visiting the most celebrated collections. They received much attention from Joseph Vernet, one of the most highly considered artists of the day, who was then working upon a series of views of the seaports of France, a commission from Louis XV., who allowed him a room in the Louvre for his studio. Vernet accompanied Romney to various places of interest, such as Versailles, Marly, and Saint-Cloud, and obtained for him free access to the Orleans collection in the Palais Royal, where the Englishman spent much of his time.

Among the French painters, the works of Le Sueur seemed to him to be the most attractive, and of the old masters it was probably Rubens whose pictures had the most immediate effect upon his own methods of painting. In the Luxembourg Gallery he had every opportunity of studying the great Fleming to good advantage, as well as many of the masterpieces of other painters now in the Louvre.

Upon his return to London, Romney moved into new rooms at 5, Coney Court, Gray's Inn, close to his friend Greene, who recommended him to a number of legal acquaintances. One of his first undertakings was a full-length portrait of Sir Joseph Yates, in his robes as a judge of the King's Bench, which was considered to be an excellent work, and secured for him commissions to paint more than one eminent lawyer, including Mr. Secondary Barnes. He was also occupied with an historical subject, 'The Death of King Edmund,' which he sent for competition to the Society of Arts in the following spring, and with it obtained the second premium of fifty guineas, the first prize falling to Hamilton for his 'British Queen Boadicea and her Daughters.' Romney's picture failed to find a purchaser, and,

according to his son, was destroyed some years later, because it took up too much room in his studio.

In 1765 he exhibited at the Free Society of Artists 'a portrait of a gentleman, three-quarters,'[1] and 'a lady's head in the character of a saint,' of similar size. In the autumn of the same year he went to the north to visit his family, but spent the greater part of the time at Lancaster, where he painted a number of portraits. In the following year 1766, his exhibited pictures were another 'three-quarters' 'Portrait of a Gentleman,' and 'A Conversation.' The last-named represented his brothers Peter and James, the former seated at his easel, explaining a proposition of Euclid to the latter, who is standing by him, with his arm resting on the chair back. It was in the possession of John Romney when he was engaged in writing his book, and he describes it as 'well composed, and with good effect, and the colouring is clear and delicate; the figures are about two feet and a half high.'

In 1767 Romney paid a second visit to his old home, and once again was so busily engaged in painting portraits at Lancaster and elsewhere, that he was obliged to take some of them back with him to London to finish. His brother Peter returned with him to town, but he was so lazy and extravagant in his habits that Romney was forced to pack him off home again.

His son notices a considerable improvement in his style between these two visits, short as the interval was. On getting back to town he made another change of lodgings, this time to the 'Golden Head,' in Great Newport Street, Long Acre, a locality from which Reynolds had removed only a few years before.[2] This year he exhibited 'Portraits of two sisters, half-length,' which was engraved in mezzotint by Robert Dunkerton in 1770 under the title of 'Sisters contemplating on Mortality.' This was priced at twenty guineas in the catalogue. A contemporary writer noted that 'the portraits of two sisters is a fine picture in the style of Mr. Reynolds,' while a second critic wrote, 'the heads in profile, very fine, but his colouring in general too cold.'

In 1768 he sent to the Exhibition a large 'Family Piece,' repre-

[1] The term 'three-quarters,' used in the Exhibition catalogues of those days, and frequently by John Romney in his *Life*, means a canvas 30 in. × 25 in., or three-quarters of a kit-cat. A 'kit-cat' was 35 in. × 26 in., a 'half-length,' 50 in. × 40 in.; a 'half-whole-length,' 63 in. × 50 in., and a 'whole-length,' 93 in. × 57 in.

[2] The house inhabited by the President is the one now known as the 'Reynolds Galleries,' belonging to Messrs. Rutley, which contains the original staircase; but the 'Golden Head' has disappeared, and it is not even known on which side of the street it stood.

senting a Mr. Leigh, a proctor in Doctors' Commons, with his wife and six children; and two portraits of gentlemen. It was in this year that he made the acquaintance of Richard Cumberland, the dramatist, who, pleased with what he had seen of his work, came to sit to him. This was for the half-length portrait engraved in stipple by William Evans as a frontispiece for Cumberland's own *Memoirs*, published in 1806, which represents the poet seated, dressed in a loose robe or cloak, with his left arm resting on a table, turned to the right, with the face almost in profile, and looking up.

Richard Cumberland, who was two years older than Romney, was born at Cambridge in 1732. He was a son of the Rev. Denison Cumberland, and great-grandson of Richard Cumberland, bishop of Peterborough. He was educated at Westminster, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and became a most prolific dramatist, writing between forty and fifty plays, all of which have been forgotten, even *The West Indian*, which was considered his masterpiece. As a young man he acted as secretary to Lord Halifax, and went with him to Ireland in 1761, his father being at the same time appointed to the see of Clonfert. In 1762 he received the office of Clerk of Reports to the Board of Trade, and in 1769 his play *The Brothers* was produced with considerable success at Covent Garden, while Garrick staged *The West Indian* in 1771. In 1775 he became Secretary to the Board of Trade, and in 1780 went on a secret mission to Spain. At the period when he first made the acquaintance of Romney, he was already one of the best-known writers of the day, and more or less intimate with the leading painters, poets, and actors. At a later date his plays were knocked out of fashion by Sheridan and Goldsmith. The former satirised him as 'Sir Fretful Plagiary' in the *Critic*, and the latter was far from complimentary to him in *Retaliation*. Garrick, who made use of him as long as his plays were popular, was outspoken about him behind his back, and declared that he had to cook up his efforts before the public would swallow them, and called him 'a man without a skin.'

Like Hayley, Cumberland never hesitated to accept portraits from Romney in return for singing the painter's praises in the public prints. In this way he obtained at least one likeness of himself, and others of his wife and daughters. Nor was he too proud to accept monetary assistance from Romney, who lent him a hundred pounds on his return from Spain in 1781.

Romney also painted for him a copy of a portrait of his great-

grandfather, Bishop of Peterborough (1632-1718), by Murray, for presentation to Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Before his portrait was finished, Cumberland took David Garrick to see it. The great actor was very frank in his criticisms of both it and the big portrait group of the Leigh family, which was then in the studio, and gave Romney some offence in so doing.

Cumberland's account of the visit is entertaining. 'I brought Garrick to see his pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour; a large family piece[1] unluckily arrested his attention; a gentleman in a close-buckled bob wig and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children (some sitting, some standing) had taken possession of some yards of canvass, very much, as it appeared, to their own satisfaction, for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. Upon this unfortunate groupe when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and turning to Mr. Romney—"Upon my word, sir," said he, "this is a very regular well-ordered family, and that is a very bright well-rubbed mahogany table, at which that motherly good lady is sitting, and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless a very excellent subject to the state, I mean (if all these are his children) but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success, which I hope will attend you—" The modest artist took the hint, as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall. When Romney produced my portrait, not yet finished—It was very well, Garrick observed; "That is very like my friend, and that blue coat with a red cape is very like the coat he has on, but you must give him something to do; put a pen in his hand, a paper on his table, and make him a poet; if you can once set him down to his writing, who knows but in time he may write something in your praise."'

'Sallies such as these,' says Allan Cunningham, 'sank deep into the mind of Romney: he was extremely sensitive; a piece of captious criticism, a touch of smart wit, or even a little humorous raillery, damped and disconcerted him, and paralysed his hand in whatever he was engaged on.'

John Romney waxes highly indignant over this incident, and enters into an elaborate defence of the picture. He says that both Cumberland and Garrick 'seem to have indulged themselves too freely in sarcasm, the former at the expense of truth, and the latter, of good

[1] The Leigh family group.

manners. But how could candour be expected from Garrick, an intimate friend of Reynolds?' He goes on to say that it was the regular custom of his father to make sketches for his principal works, and that sometimes he made several studies for one picture, with variations; and he describes one or two made for the Leigh group, 'to none of which the observations of Mr. Cumberland can with any truth apply; . . . but Cumberland's propensity to humour was so irresistible, that he was frequently led to indulge it at the expense of his friends.' The poet, however, a sincere admirer of Romney's work, was always a good friend to the painter, and it was he who persuaded him to raise his prices for a three-quarters portrait from eight guineas to ten. 'When I first knew Romney,' he says, 'he was poorly lodged in Newport Street, and painted at the small price of eight guineas for a three-quarters portrait; I sate to him, and was the first who encouraged him to advance his terms, by paying him ten guineas for his performance.' Romney's scale of prices for portraits of this size (30 in. × 25 in.) was three guineas in 1762; five guineas in 1765; seven guineas in 1767; eight guineas in 1768; ten guineas in 1769; and was raised to twelve guineas before he went to Italy.

In 1769 he exhibited two whole-lengths of ladies, and another 'Family Piece,' a portrait group of Sir George Warren, his wife, and daughter, the latter caressing a bullfinch which sits on her hand, which John Romney describes from a preliminary study in one of his father's sketch books. One of Romney's friends told Hayley that this picture was an early source of the painter's popularity; and that its truth, nature, and tenderness, had a great influence in making his name more widely known. This picture, which has never been engraved or exhibited, belongs to Lord Vernon, and is now at Sudbury Hall, in Derbyshire, where for many years it was regarded as a fine early work by Reynolds. It was at Pointon Hall, in Cheshire, until about 1830, at which time the Poynton estates came into the possession of the Vernon family. It is one of the most successful works Romney painted before going to Italy. Sir George is represented standing, pointing to the Colosseum, which Romney has indicated in the background. Lady Warren is seated, with her left arm round her small daughter's neck.

Another work of 1769 was the portrait of Bishop Watson, who was painted standing in his laboratory as professor of chemistry at Cambridge. It is stated in the Cunningham MSS. that when Hayley published his life of Romney, Watson wrote to him, 'I had little acquaintance with Romney as a man; and there were some traits in

GEORGE ROMNEY PAINTED BY HIMSELF

IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Pages 122, 264

LADY RUSSELL AND HER SON

IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR G. A. RUSSELL, BT.

Pages 134, 311-12

his character which had been reported to me that deterred me from cultivating an intimacy with him. But these matters may probably have been misrepresented to me.'

It was in this year, too, that one of his early friends, William Cockin, a writing master and teacher of arithmetic, whom he had first known in Lancaster, wrote a poetic epistle in honour of the painter, in which he exhorted him to 'be the Reynolds of thy later day.' It is a twaddling effusion at the best, but the writer thought it worthy of publication in 1776, in a small volume with some other verses.

In 1770 Romney ceased exhibiting with the Free Society and contributed two pictures to the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists in Spring Gardens. These were whole-length figures representing 'Mirth' and 'Melancholy,' suggested by Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.*

Cumberland, who saw these pictures in the studio before they were sent in to the exhibition, was much exercised in his mind as to the titles Romney should give them, and wrote the following letter to the artist on reaching home.

'*Saturday Night, 30th March.*

'Sir,—Since I waited upon you this morning my mind has been wholly occupied with reflecting upon your fine Compositions, which you are preparing for public exhibition. You will receive it only as a mark of ignorance, which means to be friendly, when I suggest to you a doubt of the title, which I understand you intend to give to your characters. If they are described under the terms of *L'Allegro e Penseroso,* I think your dramatis personæ will be liable to the following objections.

'In the first place, the titles are not classical, they are modern, barbarous, and affected. I am not master of so much Italian as to know whether they are proper, but I conceive not; they are borrowed from poetry, and by bringing Milton's descriptions to our minds, they rob your ideas of their originality. Descriptive poetry has been frequently assisted by painting, but I think the latter art has seldom excelled when the pencil has copied after the pen. Mr. West is now transcribing an ode of Horace upon canvass, and has flagrantly failed. I fancy he did not take his *Death of General Wolfe* from the faulty poem called *Quebec,* or the *Conquest of Canada.* No, Sir, let the poets wait upon you, and give your figures their natural titles in their own language, or in established classical terms. The solemn figure is strictly

that of the muse *Melpomene*; and Mr. Reynolds has led the way in calling the other *Euphrosyne*. I think I should render those into English by the titles of *Meditation* and *Mirth*.

'You will receive this as nothing more than a suggestion entirely submitted to your better judgment, and of very little importance upon the whole; but it is the subscription of my mite, and you are richly welcome to it.—I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

'RICHD. CUMBERLAND'

The 'Melancholy' is a standing figure facing the spectator, with eyes raised in an attitude of grief, the right elbow on a pedestal, and her head resting against her hand, her left arm hanging by her side. A sculptured frieze on the pedestal depicts a wounded man, and a woman, overcome by grief, supported by her attendants. The 'Mirth' is a dancing figure, holding a tambourine over her head, with four others in the background beneath some trees playing various musical instruments. 'These pictures had great merit,' writes his son. 'The drapery of Melancholy was particularly fine; its forms were broad and grand, and executed with such gusto that Mr. West, many years after, complimented Mr. Romney by saying it was equal to Raffaelle.' They undoubtedly increased his reputation.

Cumberland, under the inspiration of these and several portraits Romney was then painting, wrote a set of verses with the intention of serving the artist by making him better known. The poem was published in his *Public Advertiser*, and Cumberland afterwards reprinted it in his own *Memoirs*.

'Here I am tempted,' he wrote in the latter, 'to insert a few lines, which about this time I put together, more, perhaps, for the purpose of speaking civilly of Mr. Romney than for any other use that I could put them to; but as I find there is honourable mention made of Sir Joshua Reynolds also, I give the whole copy as a further proof that neither in verse or prose did I ever fail to speak of that celebrated painter but with the respect so justly due.'

The verses, which have been often quoted, begin:—

'When Gothic rage had put the Arts to flight
And wrapt the world in universal night,'

and conclude with the following lines in praise of Romney:—

'Apart and bending o'er the azure tide,
With heavenly Contemplation by his side,
A pensive artist stands—in thoughtful mood,
With downcast looks he eyes the ebbing flood;

No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
Himself as pure, as patient as his art,
Nor sullen sorrow, nor intemperate joy
The even tenour of his thoughts destroy,
An undistinguish'd candidate for fame,
At once his country's glory and its shame:
Rouse then at length, with honest pride inspir'd,
Romney, advance! be known and be admir'd.'

Both pictures were engraved in mezzotint in the autumn of the following year by Robert Dunkerton under the titles of 'Il Penseroso' and 'L'Allegro,' and are said to be portraits of Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Jordan, but this is very doubtful. Some confusion may have arisen between the first of them and Romney's portrait of 'Mrs. Yates as the Tragic Muse,' or 'Melpomene,' exhibited in 1771, and mezzotinted by Valentine Green in 1772.[1] Nor must they be confounded with the later work, now in the collection of Lord Leconfield, which is wrongly entitled 'Mirth and Melancholy (Lady Hamilton and Mrs. Smith),' in the Petworth Catalogue. This last picture was reproduced in stipple by John Jones in 1798 under the title of 'Il Penseroso and L'Allegro,' and is a dual portrait of Miss Wallis, the actress, painted by Romney in 1788. It remained in the possession of the artist and his son, and was bought at the latter's sale, in 1834, by Lord Egremont for eighty-eight guineas. The two pictures of 1770 were in Lord Bolton's possession at the time when Cumberland wrote his short memoir of the artist in 1803; and in 1806 were lent by him to the British Institution exhibition.

The year 1771 was a prolific one for Romney. He exhibited six pictures at Spring Gardens. Hayley, who regarded himself with some complacency as an art critic, says that at this period, though Romney's art was continually improving, and 'his resemblances were eminently strong,' yet his pictures, before he visited Italy, 'discover the defects arising from a want of studious familiarity with the great models of his art: his portraits were often hard, cold, and heavy.' Among his exhibited pictures were the whole length of 'Mrs. Yates as the Tragic

[1] This picture was lent to the Grafton Gallery Exhibition, 1900, by Mr. R. W. Hudson. She is represented in classical costume, with a dagger held aloft in her right hand, while with the left she pours out a libation upon a tripod. Ten or twelve years later Romney painted her again, a half-length, in a white dress with large gauzy frills, and elaborately curled hair partly covered by a veil, which was lent by Lord Llangattock to the Guildhall, 1902, and to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1906. The eyes, which are cast upwards, are brown, and the rosy pink of the complexion suggests that she sat to Romney in rouge. The hair has been hastily and rather carelessly painted, and the white frills and scarf dashed in rapidly, something in the manner of Gainsborough, but not with his brilliant touch. (See Plate III.)

Muse,' already mentioned, which was purchased by Alderman Boydell and praised highly at the time 'both as a faithful likeness of that distinguished actress, and as a well conceived and correct representation of the tragic character'; and another whole length of 'An Officer conversing with a Brahmin.' This was a portrait of Major Peirson, of the Honourable East India Company's service, who was a good friend to the painter, and had a high admiration for his art. He was a man, says John Romney, of an elegant and cultivated mind, interested in the advancement of science and the improvement of taste. He was a native of Burton-in-Kendal, and an intimate friend of Daniel Braithwaite. The latter had a head of the Major painted *en medaillon* by Romney, from which a seal was engraved, which the artist was in the habit of using. Romney also painted a 'Madonna and Child' for him. In the picture exhibited at Spring Gardens Major Peirson was represented standing under a palm tree, leaning upon his spontoon, in earnest conversation with a Brahmin seated on the opposite side of the picture, in simple dress and attitude, while a black servant stood listening in the background. John Romney considered that 'this picture may, perhaps, be regarded as the best he painted before he went to Italy.' Some sixteen years later, in 1787, he began what was intended to be a companion picture to it, the portraits of the Major's only daughter and heiress, and her husband, Mr. Wogan Browne. This group, in which Mrs. Browne was shown seated at a table in the act of drawing, while her husband stood by her side on the left, reaching up to a shelf of books, was never completed, though the lady's portrait was almost finished, and a few hours' work on it would have been sufficient. It remained on the artist's hands, and some years after his father's death John Romney sold it for thirty guineas to Saunders, the frame maker, who proposed to have the finishing touches put to it by Oliver.

Another of the 1771 pictures was the three-quarters portrait of a 'Lady and Child,' which might more correctly have been called 'The Virgin and Child,' as it was painted in the fashion of Italian pictures of that type. It was, indeed, the 'Madonna and Child' referred to above, which belonged to Major Peirson, and afterwards to Mrs. Wogan Browne, who also inherited the portrait of her father. In more recent years the last named picture was at Duddon Hall, near Broughton-in-Furness, in the possession of Mr. W. Millers-Rawlinson. His father, Major W. S. Rawlinson, was the eldest son of Mrs. Rawlinson of Graythwaite, eldest daughter of the Rev. John Romney.

Mr. Millers-Rawlinson had a number of works by Romney, some of which he disposed of in his lifetime, while four were sold, after his death, at Messrs. Christie's, on July 5th, 1902, the most important being the picture in question, No. 117, 'Major Peirson, of the East India Company, discussing the terms of a treaty with a Brahmin' (94 in. × 60 in.). The others were portraits of Chief Justice James Mingay, in wig and gown, 'A Young Gentleman,' and 'A Beggar Man.'

A fourth contribution to this year's exhibition was a three-quarters of 'A Beggar Man,'[1] painted in one sitting, 'whereby the handling is more marked and bold, and the manner altogether different from his usual style at that time.' It was in John Romney's possession in 1830. Two portraits completed the list. One of these, No. 142, 'A Gentleman; three-quarters,' against which in his catalogue Horace Walpole noted, 'the nose seems quite to project,' may have been the well-known portrait of Richard Cumberland, now in the National Portrait Gallery, Romney's second rendering of his friend, which was mezzotinted by Valentine Green in the autumn of the same year. About this time he also painted the portrait of Mrs. Cumberland—upon which her husband wrote some complimentary lines, which he afterwards worked into his novel of *Arundel*, published in 1789—and several of their children. One of these was a small group (30 in. × 25 in.) of the two daughters; the elder, Elizabeth, who afterwards married Lord Edward Bentinck, in a pink dress, seated, and holding a book in her lap, and the younger, Sophia, who married a Mr. Badcock, in green and white, standing by her side. This picture was sold at Christie's on June 14th, 1902, for 790 guineas. Some eight years later Romney painted Lady Edward again, the beautiful portrait in which she is wearing a large straw hat with ribbons. This was engraved by John Raphael Smith in 1779, and has been reproduced very often in modern days.

In 1772 Romney exhibited two 'three-quarters' portraits, and, according to the catalogue, he was this year made a 'Fellow' of the Incorporated Society. His connection with the two artistic institutions is a little confusing. As already noted he was one of the hundred members who signed the Deed of the Free Society of Artists in 1763, and he exhibited with them for seven consecutive years, his last appearance being in 1769. He was also one of the two hundred and eleven painters who signed the roll declaration of the Incorporated Society of Artists in 1766, but only exhibited with them in 1770 and the two following years, in the last of which, as noted above, he was

[1] Possibly the picture in the Millers-Rawlinson sale.

made a Fellow, (F.S.A.). No information is to be gained as to the reason for this, but possibly after signing the roll of the last-named Society, something occurred which caused him to take no active part for some years, but to remain a member of the Free Society.

One of the 1772 portraits was an 'Old Man,' and the other, under the title of 'An Artist,' a likeness of Ozias Humphry, the miniature painter, which was purchased by the Duke of Dorset, and placed in his collection at Knole. It was engraved in mezzotint by Valentine Green in the same year, and at a later date in stipple by Caroline Watson, and also, according to J. T. Smith, by William Pether, in large folio size, though this is not given in Mr. H. P. Horne's list of Romney's engraved works. The portrait itself was lent to the National Portrait Exhibition at South Kensington in 1867 by the Countess Delawarr. These two were the last pictures Romney ever sent to a public exhibition.

IX

ROMNEY'S most ardent desire to visit Italy was not easy of accomplishment. It required years of patient waiting, and of unremitting toil in his profession, before he had at length accumulated sufficient money for the undertaking, one of considerable expense in those days. For the four months before his departure his income averaged one hundred pounds a month, and that at a time when his price for a 'three-quarters' canvas was only twelve guineas. 'Yet,' says his son, 'he abandoned all considerations of emolument, so alluring to most minds, and devoted himself entirely to the study of his profession for two years and a quarter in a foreign country. After discharging certain debts which he had contracted during his recent illness, and leaving two hundred pounds in the hands of his banker, he set off with the remainder for Italy. On his return to England he found himself minus fifty pounds, with a debt incurred by his brothers of nearly the same amount.'

He certainly sacrificed much in order to carry out his great ambition of so perfecting himself in his art, by a close study of the old masters, that he might, in the end, attain to the highest position in a profession to which his whole energies and thoughts were devoted. It required some little determination to put on one side his connection as a portrait painter just as it was becoming lucrative, and at a time when his reputation was beginning to grow, and his art to be appreciated. It must be remembered that he was then in his thirty-ninth year, an age when most of his contemporaries had finished their studies and were already reaping the reward of them in the practice of their art.

He had intended to start in the autumn of 1772, but was prevented by a 'violent fever,' followed by an exceptional rush of sitters, so that he was not able to leave England until the following spring. His friend Ozias Humphry, the miniature painter, was his travelling companion, and the two left London on March 20th, 1773.

Humphry, who was eight years his junior, had suffered a recent

disappointment in an affair of the heart. He had fallen deeply in love with the daughter of James Payne, the architect, at that time living in St. Martin's Lane; but the lady was forced, against her inclinations, to marry Tilly Kettle, the portrait painter. In consequence of this harsh treatment, Humphry gave up his house, sold his furniture, and resolved to go abroad. For the best part of a year he was lodging at Mr. Richter's, at the Golden Head, in Great Newport Street, where Romney was then living, and where the portrait of Humphry, already mentioned, was painted; and it was through the intimacy that thus sprang up between them, that they resolved to go to Italy together.

Their journey was a leisurely one. They stayed the first night at Sevenoaks, and spent the following day at Knole with the Duke of Dorset, a patron of Humphry's, examining his art treasures. They travelled by Dover and Calais to Paris, where they remained for two or three weeks, putting up at the Hôtel de York. Romney, who throughout his life had a great aversion to writing letters, upon this journey kept a brief journal, hastily scribbled in a sketch book. These notes took the form of letters, beginning 'Dear Sir,' and were evidently the first drafts of communications to be sent to a friend at home, probably Thomas Greene. Whether they were actually rewritten and posted is doubtful. By means of them it is possible to follow in some detail the movements of the travellers, and it is greatly to be regretted that immediately upon Romney's arrival in Rome, he brought these notes and reflections to an abrupt conclusion.

The first letter, for so it may be called, was written in Paris, and is mainly occupied with the dress and taste of the French, whom he considered to be a people with no idea of simplicity, and totally void of character and feeling. 'With them every thing must be light, false, fantastical, and full of flutter and extravagance—like themselves.' 'The principal difference I have observed in dress is, that the men, from the Prince to the Valet de Chambre, wear muffs of an enormous size, slung round their waists, always *chapeau bras*, though the weather is colder here than I have felt in England the last winter. I have not seen a woman's hat on, in any order of people. It is a part of dress which gives much softness to the face by throwing it into half shadow of any colour that the wearer chooses. The English ladies dress with more elegance and greater variety; and as to beauty and sentiment, the French hold no comparison with them. The taste for painting, and the art itself are at the lowest ebb; simplicity they call vulgar, and pure elegance passes for gravity and heaviness; every thing

must have the air of a dancer or actor, the colour of a painted beauty, and the dress recommended by the barber, tailor, and mantua-maker.'

They left Paris on the 9th of April, journeying by diligence as far as Châlon-sur-Saône, and then by boat down the river, reaching Lyons in a day and a half. Romney was delighted with the scenery, and, as a painter of fair ladies, noted, wherever he went, the dresses and appearance of the women. At Lyons, he set down in his book that 'the women are of a middle size, with all their forms round and full grown; full chested, and with necks as round as the Venus de Medici; their faces not very beautiful, and browner than at Paris.' They were delayed for a week at Lyons through Romney falling ill, and then, on April the 22nd, they hired a boat and started for the two days' journey to Avignon; but the wind was too strong, and they had to put in at St. Esprit. Romney describes the grand effect of the mountains covered with snow, and gives a detailed account of the old Roman buildings at Nîmes; and dilates upon the picturesque position of Avignon.

'We were much pleased,' he says, 'with the dress of the lower order of women at Avignon; their heads were dressed with cambric, or muslin—a cap with a plain border round the face, which projected very forward all round, and a kind of cambric handkerchief, which tied under the chin, and covered the whole head in a very picturesque manner. Their faces are much browner than at Paris, which makes their linen look very white, and gives the whole head a very beautiful effect. As white is said to repel the rays of the sun more than any other colour, this may be their reason for wearing so much linen round their heads in so hot a climate; as Avignon is supposed to be hotter in summer than any other part of France. They wear little jackets of different colours, but principally black, without stays; and a handkerchief round the neck, of coloured silk, or muslin, that covers most of it, and meets between the breasts. Their petticoats are of a different colour from that of their jackets, and reach a little below their knees; which gives them a very light and airy appearance, and exposes limbs round and cleanly formed. This may be supposed to be very delightful to the eye of a painter, who had always been accustomed to see women dressed in stays, with petticoats almost covering the heels.' This long quotation is of particular interest, as it became Romney's constant endeavour to induce his sitters to discard stays and as many as possible of the exaggerations insisted upon by fashion in their

costumes, and to dress themselves for their portraits in the simpler draperies of so-called classical days.

From Avignon, the two painters journeyed by cabriolet through Aix to Marseilles. At the latter place Romney writes that 'the women are more beautiful than at Paris, and dress very gay, with less paint.' On leaving on the 26th of April, he was enraptured with the scenery of the valleys through which they passed, and the mountains which surrounded them. It 'was more like that described in romance, than any I had ever seen before: it seemed to be a place peculiarly well suited for the study of landscape painting.' Thus they travelled by Fréjus and Antibes to Nice. 'The day we arrived at Nice, being Sunday and the 2nd of May, we saw maypoles erected in several streets, and in the evening, rings of women, about fifteen or twenty in each, hand in hand, dancing round them, like *The Hours of Guido*, and singing beautiful airs. Their movements were sometimes slow, and increased gradually till they became very quick, then slow again; they were perfectly in time with one another, and moved with the greatest vivacity and spirit. The air of antiquity it carried along with it had the most enchanting effect. I thought myself removed two thousand years back, and a spectator of scenes in Arcadia. About four o'clock the next morning, I was awakened by a boy in the street, singing with amazing spirit and simplicity, some of the sweetest airs I had ever heard.'

The next day they engaged a French 'tartane' to take them to Leghorn, for four louis d'or and a half, and sailed on the following Thursday, May 6th. After spending two days at sea, they were driven back to port by adverse winds. Twice again they made the attempt, and twice were obliged to return. While waiting for more favourable weather they became acquainted with a Mr. Aubert, a Genoese merchant of English family, who took them on various expeditions in the neighbourhood of Nice, and also to visit an English resident, Mr. Lyon. 'Being holy-day, the young men and women of the neighbouring peasants were assembled in Mr. Lyon's yard with a fiddler, and dancing minuets and jigs at the time we entered; which gave us no small delight. A little time after, they formed a ring round a maypole, and danced and sung altogether, hand in hand, with that glee, which arises from innocence, simplicity, and liveliness. The airs were light, sprightly, and elegant. The women were dressed in muslin and cotton, mostly white; some had changeable silk bodies and sleeves, but all without stays; which gave a lightness and flexi-

bility to their bodies and limbs, and a variety and grace to their action, which were exceedingly pleasing.' And again, 'The Nissard women are very ordinary looking, they are remarkably brown and rather masculine; nothwithstanding, they are exceedingly pleasing in the dances.'

They were detained in Nice three weeks and a day, leaving on the 25th of May for Genoa in a felucca with Mr. Aubert. 'To our mortification, however,' writes Romney, 'the tartane sailed the day before us, and got clear off with a fair wind.' After a run of an hour and a half they put in at Mentone, where Mr. Aubert took them to call upon a Mr. Albans, 'a great merchant and polite gentleman,' who induced them to stay with him the whole of the next day; and then, on the 27th, they started early in the morning upon the 145 miles run to Genoa, which they reached at midnight.

At Genoa they visited the principal palaces, and Romney jotted down in his sketch-book short descriptions of their decorations and pictures, which are of interest as showing the painters whose work made the strongest appeal to him. Of the Balbi Palace he writes that 'it contains a great number of different masters, but none very capital. There are some by Vandyke, very good, but slight; and more in the Flemish style than those we have in England. There are the beginnings of two heads painted in oil upon paper pasted on canvass, which have great thinness and freshness. There is a small Parmigiano with some parts very good. A Buonaroti, some of the heads very fine; the subject, Christ praying in the garden.'

In the Durazzo Palace 'is a very capital picture by Paul Veronese, of Mary Magdalene washing the feet of Christ. It is in excellent preservation, and has the freshness of one painted but a year. The surface is dry without any gloss, like a Distemper painting; so that, though it hangs facing the light, it may be seen to great advantage. There is a fluency in the touch that will convince every artist who examines it, that it was not painted with oil, but with some very thin limpid vehicle; nor in distemper, I believe, as the colours are better united in some parts of the picture than that will admit of. There is a very rugged kind of touch in the hair and other parts, as if it had been painted with simple water. There are some parts where it is broken a little, and looks dry and crumbly.'

In a palace, the name of which he had forgotten—evidently the Palazzo Rosso of the Brignole-Sala family—he notes several good pictures; 'one in particular, The Assumption of the Virgin, by

Corregio, or Parmigiano. It is a very small picture, but a most beautiful composition. The figure of the virgin is suspended in the clouds in a very becoming posture, with her arms extended; and looking up, with a very sweet countenance, but not very beautiful. She is surrounded by a group of angels and children, hand in hand; some of the angels are in the most graceful actions imaginable, and the forms of their limbs and heads are perfectly angelic; the beauty of the features, the angelic sweetness of the countenances, and the elegant disposition of the hair, make them divine beyond conception or imitation. There are two whole lengths by Vandyke, a gentleman and lady; the gentleman is on horseback in a very spirited action; the lady's picture is very slight, but charmingly coloured; it has a transparency throughout, and a glow in the face, that I have never seen before in Vandyke; the attitude is very simple, but very graceful and genteel. There are two beginnings of them in oil colour, upon paper pasted on canvass; they are very thin and transparent, and seem to be painted with nothing but vermilion, brown ochre, white, and black. There are some other pictures by Vandyke, and a very good one by Rubens, a Bacchanalian piece.'

In another unnamed palace, 'there is a very fine head by Raphael, a Judith with the head of Holofernes. The face is beautiful and grand; there is great spirit and strength in the eye, and the mouth is grave, but very sweet. It is a very good tone of colour, is highly finished, and in excellent preservation.' 'In the church of the Jesuits (St. Ambrogio), which is near the Doge's palace, there is a very fine picture of the Assumption of the Virgin, by Guido, and two pretty good ones by Rubens on the same subject.'

He concludes, as usual, with a description of the women and their dress. 'The Genoese women are in general elegant in their figure, have great ease in their action, and walk extremely well. They are of a good size, are fair, but very pale, which is occasioned by the dress they wear. It is a loose robe of calico or thick muslin, which goes over their heads like a veil, and over their shoulders and arms like a capuchin. They let it fall over the forehead as low as the eyebrows, and twist it under the chin; they generally have one hand up almost to the chin, holding the veil with their fingers beautifully disposed among the folds, and the other across the breast. They are short-waisted, and have very long trains, which produce the most elegant flowing lines imaginable; so that with the beautiful folds of the veil or cloak, they are, when they move, the finest figures that

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can be conceived. When the veil is off, you see the most picturesque and elegant hair; it is braided up the back of the head and twisted round several times and beautifully varied; it is pinned with a long silver pin; where it is not braided, it is flat to the head with some loose hair round the face.'

Unfortunately Romney abandoned his letter-diary on leaving Genoa, so that we have no personal record of his doings while in residence in Rome. The two travellers journeyed from Genoa to Leghorn by boat, encountering a severe storm by the way, during which the Italian sailors, in the manner of their country, went down on their knees instead of looking after the sails. According to Humphry's account, Romney was greatly alarmed, though he declared that his consternation did not arise from personal fear, but from 'tender concern at the prospect of being suddenly separated for ever from his friends and relations.' By this time they had had quite enough of seafaring, and finished the journey by land, passing through Pisa to Florence, where they stayed but a few days, and then by Siena and Viterbo to Rome, which they reached on the 18th of June.

Romney wasted no moment after reaching the goal of his ambitions, but immediately began to work with his usual impetuosity. In order that he might make the most of his limited opportunities, he gave up almost all society, seeing but little of Humphry, and making few friends among the numerous artists then settled in Rome; and devoted himself entirely to systematic and incessant study.

John Romney is indignant with Hayley for what he considers his 'uncandid' statements as to the painter's motives for thus withdrawing himself from the society of his brother painters. Hayley, however, though perhaps a little apt to exaggerate, seems to have been not very far from the truth. 'Such was the cautious reserve,' he writes, 'which his singular mental infirmity, a perpetual dread of enemies, inspired, that he avoided all farther intercourse with his fellow-traveller, and with all the other artists of his country, who were then studying at Rome.' Romney, he adds, was 'very singularly addicted to that honorable, yet perilous, kind of intemperance, the intemperance of study! and I impute those deplorable infirmities, that over-clouded the evening of his day, to his great want of that self-command, which should have led him in regulating his own studies

(both of early and of maturer life) to establish the proper salutary intervals of labour and rest. His powerful, and imperious, fancy precluded him from the advantages of such useful discretion.'

The artist's son not unnaturally regarded this statement as a grossly exaggerated picture of his father's conduct and habits. According to him, Romney by no means gave up all society, but became friendly with such men as Wright of Derby, Thomas Harrison, the architect, and Nathaniel Marchant, the sculptor in gems, afterwards a member of the Royal Academy. 'It is very probable,' he writes, 'that he might have disliked the intrusion of pryers, and the company of idlers; but I never at any time noticed that peculiar dread of enemies which Mr. Hayley imputes to him. He had penetration enough to distinguish who were friendly to him, and who were not, and of course was shy towards the latter; this was natural. I am disposed also to admit, though I do not know that it was the fact, that he might have felt some dread of the friends of Sir Joshua when they came about him; knowing well, that they were so attached to his rival from personal motives, that he had little chance of candour from them.' He explains that the coolness between Humphry and his father was of short duration, and sets down the former as 'undoubtedly a gossip and idler.'

No doubt Romney also had some acquaintance with Fuseli, who was then at work in Rome, though the two men were not particularly sympathetic. Several other English artists also formed part of the foreign colony. Thomas Banks, the sculptor, in a letter to J. T. Smith's father, written in the summer of 1773, mentions some of them. 'Since I have been in Rome there has arrived here the abovementioned Mr. Barron, Mr. Marchant, and Mr. Townley; Mr. Whalley, Mr. Damer, and Mr. Keene, and lastly, Messrs. Humphry and Romney; I had forgot one Mr. Foy though—a Sculptor, a very ingenious, worthy young man. . . . Among the students of painting, Fuseli cuts the greatest figure; last season he had pictures bespoke to the amount of 1300*l.*, good encouragement for a student, yet nothing more than, from his great abilities, he is justly entitled to. Little Wickstead has had most of the portraits to paint last season . . . but Barron arriving here the beginning of the season, and having great merit in the portrait way, etc., got so many to paint, as proved no small mortification to the aforesaid gentleman, as well as his helpers.' Philip Wickstead was a pupil of Zoffany's, and painted small whole-lengths with a certain taste, while Hugh

Barron, in addition to his merits as a portrait painter, was a good musician.

Little is known of Romney's life in Rome, which lasted for a year and seven months, but there is no doubt that the whole of the time was given up to serious study. Many of his days were spent in making copies from the old masters, though he also produced some original work from models. John Romney possessed three heads taken from picturesque street types. One was of a dwarf, nicknamed *Baiocco*, from his habit of begging for pence, a savage-looking man with black hair and beard. Another is said to have been a professional assassin, handsome and fierce, with black curling hair and beard, whom Romney thought a good model for 'Brutus.' The third was a picturesque head of an old Jew. 'It is exquisitely painted,' writes his son, 'and with much delicacy of touch; the aspect is mild, but penetrating and dignified. The head is bald, and the locks and beard grey. He painted another head from this model for the character of Moses, which was sold in an unfinished state at the auction of his pictures. The head which I have is much superior.'

Romney also availed himself of the opportunities more easily procured in Rome than in London of studying from the nude. His son's account of this is so unwittingly entertaining that it must not be omitted. 'There was at that time in Rome a young female of fine form, who lent herself to the artists for hire as a naked model, and by these means supported herself and her mother. Notwithstanding this species of prostitution, it does not appear that her mind was actually corrupt. Her mother always attended her, so that she was never left alone; and as much delicacy and decorum were observed as the nature of the business would admit of. Had the slightest liberty been attempted, it would have been repelled with indignation; so, at least, it was generally understood. Mr. Romney availed himself of so favourable an opportunity for studying the *nude*, and made many sketches from her; he thus acquired an accurate knowledge of the female form in all its diversities of attitude. I believe he painted only one picture from her: it represents a naked female in the character of a *Wood-Nymph* reposing at full length upon the ground, with her back turned towards the spectator. The fore part of her body is raised and resting upon her right arm and elbow, and she is contemplating the reflection of her beautiful face in a brook. She lies upon drapery of white linen and a pink robe, which gives a rich warmth and harmony

of colouring to the whole. The back ground is a wild forest. This picture came into the possession of Mr. Keate, the surgeon, for an inadequate price. Mr. Romney began a half-length portrait of Mrs. Keate, and received payment for it, forty guineas; but the portrait, from some cause or other, was never finished, and Mr. Keate requested this picture in its stead. The Wood Nymph was, in my estimation, cheap at two hundred guineas; but it was not the fashion in those days to buy fancy-pictures.'

There was another picture painted in Rome which exercised the prim and precise mind of John Romney even more than those studies from the nude which he regarded with such evident displeasure, and considered were to be tolerated only as a means to the still greater perfection of his father's art. The picture in question, 'Providence brooding over Chaos,' as he calls it, he is obliged to confess he looked upon 'rather as an object of censure than of praise.' As a clergyman he felt bound to protest. 'It is very natural, however, to be misled by the influence of great examples; both Michael Angelo and Raffaelle have represented the *Almighty* with the figure and character of human nature; a practice too much countenanced by the corruptions and idolatry of the Roman catholic religion: for surely it is a profanation of the grossest character to exhibit by a degrading representation, the invisible Creator of all things, whose very name should not be uttered without feelings of veneration and awe.' With filial affection, however, he proceeds to hunt for texts that 'would seem to favour the idea that the Almighty had a circumscribed form.' In this he is only in part successful, and finishes by finding a passage 'conclusive as to the impropriety, (not to say impiety,) of representing the Almighty under any form whatever, even though not intended for the purpose of idolatry.'

This impious picture 'represented a venerable old man borne upon the clouds. He fronted the spectator, and had his arms outspread; his hair was parted on his forehead, and his beard flowing. There was a mild expression in his countenance, and he seemed rapt in the performance of some great operation. The lower part of the picture exhibited a chaotic mass of obscurity and darkness. This picture remained in his gallery in Cavendish square for some years. At the time of Lord George Gordon's riots in 1780, it excited great alarm in the mind of Mr. Romney, lest it should attract the notice of the rioters and be regarded as an object of Roman catholic idolatry, and thus lead to the destruction of his house. It was therefore immedi-

ately removed to a back apartment. When I made out the catalogue for the sale of his pictures, I called it *Jupiter Pluvius*; borrowing the idea from a representation of that Pagan divinity on the column of Marcus Aurelius, to which the figure in Mr. Romney's picture bore some resemblance.'

Romney spent much of his time in the close study of the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo in the Vatican, and copied in his sketch-books all the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel. He had brought with him a letter of recommendation from the Duke of Gloucester to the Pope, Clement XIV., and by this means obtained permission to erect scaffolding in the Vatican for the better making of studies after Raphael. Another noble patron who had befriended him and had urged him to visit Italy was the Duke of Richmond, in whose gallery of casts in Privy Gardens Romney had been in the habit of working. John Romney possessed a number of studies in oil, after Raphael, made in this way, including the head of Heliodorus, and two other heads from the same fresco; the head and part of the body of the woman carrying the buckets of water in the 'Incendio del Borgo,' and also a pencil drawing of the whole figure; and from the same picture a small copy in oil and umber of the man bearing his infirm and aged father upon his shoulders; the head of Sappho from the 'Mount Parnassus'; and another of the group of figures in 'The School of Athens' which represents Archimedes explaining a diagram to his youthful pupils; the latter being purchased at the Romney sale by Dr. Henry Ainslie.

But the most important work upon which he was engaged while in Rome was a copy of the lower half of Raphael's 'Transfiguration,' of the same size as the original. 'It was painted in oil and umber upon single sheets of paper, which he afterwards united upon one large canvass. The whole formed a most accurate and spirited copy of that last work, and masterpiece of Raffaelle; the finest picture, perhaps, in the world; in which all the excellencies of that great master were combined, and which alone was a sufficient school to form a young painter. . . . To accomplish this work he had a scaffold erected in the church di San Pietro in Montorio, where this picture was the altar-piece.'[1] The Duke of Richmond offered him one hundred guineas for it when he returned to England, but he refused, being anxious to retain it for the purposes of reference and study, and also

[1] *John Romney*, p. 102.

regarding the price as inadequate. At the sale of his pictures after his death it was knocked down for six guineas.

Romney, though working in Rome with the utmost ardour on such important studies as this large copy, found time to make a certain number of sketching expeditions about the city and its environs, as his sketch-books show. In this way he made drawings of St. Peter's, the Colosseum, and other famous buildings, and of the Sibyl's Temple, Neptune's Grotto, and the Cascatelli at Tivoli. He was too occupied with his painting to have many adventures, but one small one he did encounter, which might have been serious in its consequences. He was lodging at the Jesuits' College at the time when the Pope was taking drastic measures to suppress the Society of Jesus. Romney, wrapped up in his art, and quite ignorant of the Italian language, had no knowledge of what was on foot, and on the day on which the building was suddenly surrounded by a military guard, and all egress prohibited, he was abruptly stopped by a sentry as he was going out. Not understanding, and absorbed in his own thoughts, he pushed on, whereupon the guard levelled his musket. This brought him rapidly to earth, and he gasped the word *Inglese* with promptitude, thereby possibly saving his life.

Before leaving Rome he received a long letter from Richard Cumberland, dated August 14th, 1774, and addressed from Warwick Castle. It gave him the art gossip of the day, and described some of the pictures in the annual exhibition. 'Barry fell into the false sublime and became ridiculous; West was in the wane, and our friend Sir Joshua, though very voluminous, had nothing supremely capital, coarse and flaring in his style and colours, he seems tired with nature and is bringing in vagaries to hide his want of improvement.' He then thanked Romney somewhat floridly for a present of the 'Head of Sappho,' which he promised to keep 'with those performances of yours which are for ever in my eye, and increase in value every day. I have got back my wife's picture with the boy out of Ireland, and prize it inestimably.' In conclusion, he asked him to undertake as a commission for Lord Warwick the purchase of a picture of some historical subject, about 63 in. × 43 in. in size, to fill a particular place in the Castle, for a sum not exceeding one hundred pounds; also to buy a few portraits for a collection his lordship was making: 'they must be heads only (which we call three-quarters) of spirit and effect; Titian or Guido, if they can be met with in compass of moderation; marked

characters, or dignified persons; and your kind compliance with this request will gratify him most highly.' Lord Warwick was also anxious to have the first choice of purchase of any copies Romney might make and bring home with him.

He left Rome on January 10th, 1775, after a residence of nearly a year and seven months, and journeyed towards home in a leisurely fashion, remaining three weeks in Florence, and a fortnight in Bologna. At the latter place he was offered the Presidentship of the Academy of Painting, which honour he felt compelled to decline. He reached Venice by way of Ferrara on the 25th of February.

We learn from the draft of a letter, written in one of his sketch-books shortly after his arrival in Venice, and addressed to Charles Greville, that it had been his original intention to leave Rome in the previous October, but that he feared the ill effect of travelling in the winter, and also was a little uncertain as to whether he could get permission to copy certain pictures in Florence, so that he resolved to stay where he was until the worst weather was over. It was upon making this decision that he began his large copy of Raphael's 'Transfiguration.' 'I think I was particularly happy in my determination,' he writes, 'as it is a work where all the excellencies of that master are united: there is a perfection in the finishing hardly to be met with, and it is designed with more gusto than any other of his oil paintings.' Greville had sent him letters of introduction to Lord Cowper and Sir Horace Mann in Florence; but, with every desire to serve him, they were unable to procure for him the necessary permission to take down any of the pictures in the galleries for the purpose of making copies or studies. He did not linger, therefore, for any time in that city, though he was by no means idle while there. 'I met with great entertainment from the old masters,' he says, 'in particular, Cimabue and Masaccio; I admired the great simplicity and purity of the former, and the strength of character and expression of the latter. I was surprised to find several of their ideas familiar to me, till I recollected having seen the same thoughts in M. Angelo and Raphael, only managed with more science.'

He travelled from Florence to Venice in company with Mr. Udney, the English consul in the latter place. In Bologna he was much taken with the works of the Carracci. 'I think there is a style of painting in

them very much to be admired, particularly in Lodovico; his thoughts are more elevated than those of any other of that school, (though frequently borrowed from Titian or Correggio); but he is less correct than his scholars; his forms are large and few, the tone of his colouring is grave and low; and there is a gloom in the effect of his pictures well adapted to the pathetic and terrible. I admire the St. Agnes of Dominichino, and the Peter and Paul of Guido; but neither so much as the St. Cecilia of Raphael, and the St. Margaret of Parmigiano.' The rest of the letter is taken up with an account of his fruitless attempts to find pictures suitable for purchase for the Earl of Warwick; and he winds up by saying—'I have been four days in Venice, and am at present almost lost to every thing in this world but Titian.'

A second letter of about the same date is addressed to a friend named Carter, a fellow student left behind in Rome. Romney grows poetic in his account of his last view of that city as seen from the summit of Mount Viterbo. 'I looked with an eager eye to discover that divine place. It was enveloped in a bright vapour, as if the rays of Apollo shone there with greater lustre than at any other spot upon this terrestrial globe. My mind visited every place, and thought of every thing that had given it pleasure; and I continued some time in that state, with a thousand tender sensations playing about my heart, till I was almost lost in sorrow—think, O think, my dear Carter, where you are, and do not let the sweets of that divine place escape from you; do not leave a stone unturned that is classical; do not leave a form unsought out that is beautiful; nor even a line of the great Michael Angelo.' The remainder of the letter follows on the same lines as the one to Greville. In Florence, he says, 'the Grand Duke will not suffer the Venus to be taken down, nor any picture in the Pitti Palace: alleging, that if he suffer any one he cannot refuse others, which he had done lately to two or three who had applied through very great interest. In order to recompence myself, I got a ladder and examined them very near several times, and found more information than I expected. I was very much entertained, and I believe employed my time to greater advantage, in making sketches from the works of Cimabue, Masaccio, Andrea del Sarto, and Michael Angelo. . . . I was very well pleased with the school of Caracci. I think their style of painting grand, and that gravity of colour, and gloomy effect certainly well adapted to subjects of terror and pathos.'

THE SHIPWRECK SCENE FROM "THE TEMPEST"

FROM THE ENGRAVING IN BOYDELL'S "SHAKESPEARE"

Pages 148, 157-8, 351-2

MRS. CLEMENTS

IN THE COLLECTION OF COLONEL CLEMENTS

In a third letter, to Ozias Humphry, he describes at greater length the effect produced upon him by the Bolognese school, and also gives some account of what he had been doing in Venice. On reaching Bologna—'my first business, as you may suppose, was to look for the pictures which Sir Joshua has mentioned in his Discourses. I found them nearly such as he has described them. The St. Francis among his friars, and many others by Lodovico Caracci are so very dark, far from the eye, and in such bad lights, that it was with difficulty I could make out many of the figures; some of them were also much decayed; however I think there is much to be admired. There is a grandeur of character in the heads of his old men, and a dignity in the style of his figures in general, equal to most masters; and I think, if he could be come at and seen in good lights, some time might be spent to advantage in making studies. I also saw some clever things of Dominichino and Guercino, which raised my opinion of them. I think the great strength, breadth, and bold manner of working, which are peculiar to that school, are exceedingly well adapted to some kinds of historical painting. I need not say anything of the St. Cecilia of Raphael. There is a St. Margaret by Parmigiano, which I think a very extraordinary picture.'

'I have been three weeks at Venice, and have seen most of the works of Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese. I am sorry to find many of the first very dark, and much damaged; some of them have been extraordinary productions; but as there are many of them and parts of most in tolerable condition, there is enough to study from, perhaps not of the sort you and I might wish for—I mean women and children.—The Death of the Friar, and the St. Laurence have been amazingly fine pictures in invention, composition, character, expression, and colour. I have been hard at work some time past in making studies from a picture of Titian in the *Friary*. It represents a Madonna and Child, and St. Peter upon a flight of steps, and below, a group of portraits; it is in Titian's best manner, and, as it has been cleaned lately and is in good preservation, is in a favourable state to study from. Many of the heads are admirable in every respect as portraits; it hangs, however, in a much weaker light than the Transfiguration, and, what is still more mortifying, I could only work after mid-day, and was obliged to have every thing taken down and removed at night, which made it exceedingly inconvenient. There was one favourable circumstance, however, I could work as near as

I pleased. I am now making a copy of a St. John the Baptist by Titian, a middle aged figure standing, it is in good preservation and in a tolerable light; it is very finely coloured, but rather dirty. There is also a very early picture by Titian in the school of the Charetè; it is in good condition and advantageously placed for studying; it is one of the first things he painted after he came to Venice, and of course not in his best manner; however, notwithstanding, many parts of it are very well, and the manner of working is plainer to be seen than in any other of his pictures which I have met with. I mention these as being the only things I have yet seen that one can sit down to study from; his other works are either exceedingly dirty, damaged, or placed out of reach; excepting Judith, in one of the palaces, the only easel picture I have seen of value, though inferior to some things in the Borghese and Colonne palaces in Rome. However, upon the whole, I am very glad I did not make any studies from his works in Rome or Florence; being thoroughly convinced that a just idea of Titian can never be formed out of Venice. His great works are of a much higher order, and of a very different character from those in Rome. Even his damaged pictures, as far as examination goes, will be objects of study, having parts in good condition.' In conclusion, he mentions the great kindness shown to him by Mr. Udney, more particularly when he was laid up by illness for a week at Bologna. Romney was a guest in the consul's house during a part, at least, of his stay in Venice, and, thanks to his assistance, procured every possible facility for copying pictures.

In Venice, too, Romney became acquainted with Edward Wortley Montagu, who had settled there after his travels in the East. The two men, though so dissimilar in character, were attracted to one another, and were soon upon terms of familiar relationship. Wortley Montagu had adopted the Turkish dress, manners, and method of living, and this appealed to Romney's artistic eye. He painted a half-length portrait of his new friend in Eastern garb, which proved, says Hayley, that the artist 'had studied intensely, and successfully, the celebrated colourists of the Venetian School.' Romney's departure from Venice brought this new friendship to an end, for a year later, on April 29th, 1776, Montagu died in Padua, from a wound in the throat caused by swallowing a small bone, which set up rapid and fatal inflammation. The portrait of him Romney sold on his return to England to the Earl of Warwick for fifty guineas, on the understanding that he was allowed to make a copy of it before parting with it. The copy he

retained in his own possession for many years, but it was eventually sold to Mr. John Milnes, of Wakefield, for forty guineas, possibly at the time when Romney was painting the various members of the Milnes family, now in the possession of the Earl of Crewe at Fryston. A small line-engraving was made from it by J. Condé in 1793 for Seward's *Anecdotes*. Romney also made a copy of the head in crayons, 'with a view,' says his son, 'to ascertain how far he should be able to fix that fugitive manner of painting. This was a subject that had sometimes engaged his thoughts; for certainly if transparency and durability could be added to the other characteristics of crayon-painting, a great object in art would be gained. The experiment succeeded nearly to his full expectation; for the glazing was applied without disturbing the crayons, which produced a clearness and brilliancy of colouring, hardly equalled in the finest Venetian pictures. The process, however, was, I believe, attended with so much difficulty, that he was not tempted to make any more experiments; or, at least, he had not sufficient leisure for such pursuits.' This crayon study, to John Romney's indignation, was given to Hayley's mother, 'prompted, I have no doubt, by Mr. Hayley, who availed himself of every means to get possession of such pictures as he had set his mind upon.' This study may be the head lent by Sir John Milbanke, Bart., V.C., to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1907, No. 138, a circular canvas, 21 in. × 18½ in., in which Montagu is wearing a yellow and white turban, brown coat, and red undervest. Another version, apparently a replica of the Warwick Castle example, 56½ in. × 43 in., was lent by the Earl of Wharncliffe to the Guelph Exhibition, 1891, No. 343. John Romney mentions another picture with which Hayley had walked off, the head of a young girl, painted from the daughter of Mr. Guy, a surgeon of Chichester, of which he speaks in rapturous terms, and is evidently very angry with the poet for asking for it. 'It was one of the most lovely things I ever saw; it was truly angelic. It represented a young female

> "*With* looks communing with the skies,
> *Her* rapt soul sitting in *her* eyes."

'It was a sight sufficient to inspire the beholder with sentiments of religious sympathy—it was a visible illustration of piety—a sermon addressed to the eyes—it was equal to Guido in grace, and superior in expression.—Her long flowing hair floated loosely over her shoulders, her head encircled with a small blue fillet, and her soft blue eyes, all contributed to sanctify the character. . . . It was left by Mr. Hayley's

Will to one of his friends; but most of the pictures given to Mr. Hayley were, after his decease, disgracefully consigned to the hammer.'

While in Venice, he received a letter from the Incorporated Society of Artists, dated Feb. 10th, 1775, asking him to send contributions to their forthcoming exhibition, but this invitation he declined. After a stay of about two months, he went on to Parma, where he was captivated by Correggio, 'whose tenderness and grace he often emulated very happily in his figures of women and children,' says Hayley. 'Having already studied the principles of simplicity, grandeur, and expression in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and afterwards in those of the Bolognese; and having, also, now devoted a portion of his valuable time to investigate the mechanical processes of colouring as practised in the Venetian School, and especially in the works of Titian; not overlooking at the same time the other high qualities of this distinguished painter; nothing more remained, in order to complete the circle of his studies,' writes his son, 'but to impress upon his mind the graceful forms, and rosy beauties of Parmigiano and Correggio: and surely nothing could be of greater benefit to a painter of women and children, than to have a clear perception and feeling of that inexpressible grace and sweetness, which distinguish and characterize the airs and attitudes of the female figures and angels of these respective masters; and to acquire that *morbidezza* which is so remarkable in the colouring of Correggio. It does not appear, however, that he made either copies or studies from their works; but it is manifest from his own productions, that he had not been an idle or inattentive observer of their characteristic excellencies.'

It was his intention later in life to paint a large picture in the *Correggiesque* style, the subject being 'Prospero, Ferdinand, and Miranda,' from the latter part of the first act of *The Tempest*. His son describes in detail the preliminary sketch Romney made for it, but the picture itself was never carried out.[1]

After a week or two spent busily in Parma, Romney hurried homewards. At Turin he met an Italian fencing-master and his newly-married wife, bound, as he was, for Paris, and they offered the artist a seat in their 'calash,' on his paying a third of the cost. Romney, however, was not so comfortable as he expected to be, as the carriage was overcrowded with luggage, which, combined with the rough roads over the Alps, produced much bumping and jolting. The

[1] See page 144.

horses, too, were good, and Romney, a nervous man, found the way in which they dashed down steep hills distinctly alarming. The fencing-master, who was stout, fierce, and bluff-looking, spent most of the time in quarrelling with his wife, and taxing her with infidelity. She was a beautiful and amusing young creature, with a good voice, and entertained the artist with songs in return for chocolates. The cautious Romney made a point of walking down the steepest declivities, and so, on one occasion, was saved from a severe shaking, if not a worse fate, for the horses ran away and upset the carriage, throwing out his travelling companions, who, though stunned and bruised, had happily no bones broken. Romney, secretly amused at the woe-begone expression upon the Italian's naturally ferocious countenance, could not resist the temptation of making a hasty sketch of the scene while the vehicle, with the assistance of some country folk, was righted and the luggage reloaded. 'At the inns upon the road,' his son's entertaining account runs, 'through defect of accommodations, they were often obliged to sleep in a double-bedded room; and *Signore Italiano*, rising early, frequently left his *Cara Sposa* in bed, unmindful of the indelicate situation in which Mr. Romney was placed; which, however, did not seem to occasion any embarrassment on the part of the lady: indeed she was always very familiar and easy in her deportment, addressing him upon all occasions as her *caro Signore Anglese*.' Romney, as an admirer of Sterne, had in all probability read, as all the world was doing, the *Sentimental Journey*, published in 1768, and this unconventional situation must have recalled to his mind a very similar one in that very popular book.

On reaching Lyons the painter felt that he had experienced enough of these adventures, and so said farewell to his new friends, preferring to finish his journey alone. In Paris, however, he found himself in the extremely awkward position of having insufficient money to enable him to reach England, and his dilemma was intensified by his ignorance of the language. Happily for him he chanced to meet a Mr. Henry Peirse, of Yorkshire, whose acquaintance he had made in Venice. Romney, ten or eleven years later, painted a very beautiful full-length portrait of this gentleman's little daughter or granddaughter, which, in 1900, was sold at Messrs. Christie's for seven thousand guineas. Mr. Peirse was good enough to lend him the necessary funds for completing the last stage of his travels, and, leaving Versailles on June 22nd, he was back in London on July 1st, 1775.

X

UPON his return to London he went back to the chambers in Gray's Inn he had occupied between 1764 and 1767, where he remained for the next six months. John Romney could find no record of any pictures painted during this period, but thought that 'a few portraits of particular friends, some studies, and half-finished fancy-pieces, probably constituted the whole of his performances, as he must have been quite unsettled during that time.' A few weeks after his arrival he received a letter from Richard Cumberland containing the offer of a commission from the Earl of Warwick. 'He has collected some very respectable portraits,' wrote the dramatist, 'chiefly of Vandyke, and has reserved a place in his principal apartment for a companion, where he wishes you to try your strength in the same bow with the best masters of portrait painting; but as he would not fetter your fancy to any fixt subject, he leaves the object to your own chusing and all circumstances about it, only it must be female, as I believe it is to companion with Charles the first's queen by Vandyke. It is his wish that you would work upon this picture at the castle, and he proposes to give you possession of an entire tower, where you will have choice of light, a most delightful workshop, bedroom, study, books, and closets for your tools, with all peace and content that solitude and serenity can give you.' The beginning of October was the time suggested, but for some reason, although Romney must have felt flattered by the proposed commission, he did not undertake it; nor is there any evidence that he ever paid a visit to Warwick, although Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower states in his book that he was a frequent guest there.

In September, Adam Walker wrote to him from York, where he was residing for the time, and, apparently, acting as guide to the sights of the city to visitors, begging him to come down into the country, and holding out hopes of a number of commissions. 'If you should ever condescend to try provincial practice, York is not beneath your notice,' he urged; 'or should you have a little time to trifle away, perhaps we

could find you something even in your own way that you would not despise.'[1] Walker's affection for the painter was greater than his knowledge of art, for he concluded with a rapturous description of the work of a Mrs. Morritt, of York, who copied 'old masters' in worsted, which he thought equalled the originals.

During Romney's absence in Italy, James Barry had started, in 1773, a project for the decoration of the interior of St. Paul's, and six painters were selected by the Royal Academy for that purpose. These were Reynolds, West, Barry, Cipriani, Dance, and Angelica Kauffmann, and each picture was to be done at the artist's own expense. This scheme, however, had to be abandoned owing to the opposition of the Bishop of London. In the following year the Society of Arts stepped into the breach, and projected a series of historical pictures for the decoration of their new room in the Adelphi. They chose the six painters already mentioned, and added to them four others—George Romney, Wright of Derby, Mortimer, and Penny, who were to be allowed to take the profits arising from the exhibition of their work for a certain period. The artists in question met at the Turk's Head to discuss the offer, and finally decided to reject it, on account of certain of the terms laid down by the Society; and the matter ended by Barry beginning the work single-handed in 1777. All the preliminary discussions took place during Romney's absence from England, and he probably knew little of the scheme, though it was one which must have appealed to him; but it is doubtful whether he would have taken a share in any project in which both Reynolds and Mortimer were to take an active part.

Shortly after his return his friends began to urge him to move into a more fashionable quarter of the town, in order that more sitters of social consequence might be attracted to his studio. A large house in Cavendish Square, formerly No. 37 and now No. 32, on the south side, was just then vacant through the death of Francis Cotes, R.A., and it was pointed out to him that this was an excellent opportunity to settle himself permanently within easy distance of the fashionable world. The rent is said to have been one hundred guineas a year. Romney, who had come back from his travels with an empty purse, and to a certain extent in debt, was at first very averse to burdening himself with so expensive a dwelling, regarding his immediate success as very uncertain, and conscious that he had a family in the north to support, and more than one brother to help. 'His case was not that of a painter in full

[1] A letter quoted by Mrs. Gamlin, *George Romney and his Art*, p. 70.

practice,' writes his son, 'removing from one habitation to another; he was beginning, as it were, *de novo*, without the certainty of a single sitter; and had he continued for two or three months without employment, or had he been disabled by sickness for so long a time, his ruin was inevitable. This was in fact the grand crisis of his life, on which depended all that is dear to man in this world—fame, fortune, and happiness.' Finally, however, the arguments of his friends prevailed, and he somewhat reluctantly gave way, entering into possession of his new abode at Christmas, 1775.

The house is no longer standing. It was demolished in 1904, owing to its dilapidated condition, and a new building with a stone front was erected in its place. Mr. Lawrence Romney, who went over it just before it was pulled down, says that the studio, which was behind the house at the end of a small garden, had an east light, and was a small and beautifully proportioned room, with a good ceiling and a carved fireplace; and had been little altered since Romney's day, except that a different entrance had been made. The original fireplace has been re-erected in the new building.

It was, no doubt, with good reason that Romney felt anxious as to the wisdom of this step, and the possible result of so great an increase in his expenditure, more particularly as he had been absent from London for so long a time; but it can hardly be true that he was in such a state of abject fear as that in which Hayley pictures him. 'In his singular constitution,' he tells us, 'there was so much nervous timidity, united to great bodily strength, and to enterprising and indefatigable ambition, that he used to tremble, when he waked every morning in his new habitation, with a painful apprehension of not finding business sufficient to support him. These fears were only early flutterings of that incipient hypochondriacal disorder, which preyed in secret on his comfort during many years; and which, tho' apparently subdued by the cheering exhortations of friendship, and great professional prosperity, failed not to shew itself more formidably, when he was exhausted by labor, in the decline of life.'

Such fears as he may have had, however, were not entirely without foundation, as some weeks passed before a single sitter came to the new studio, and he must have spent some anxious hours; but when a beginning had once been made, his future success was never in doubt; sitters came in rapidly increasing numbers, and for the rest of his life he had more work to do than he could accomplish with justice either to his own powers or to the best interests of his clients. The Duke of

Richmond was the first to give him a commission for a portrait. This was the picture already mentioned in which the sitter was shown in profile, reading.[1] It was universally admired, more than one copy of it being ordered by the Duke's friends. His grace, indeed, proved to be a generous and appreciative patron, for he commissioned portraits of Admiral Keppel, Edmund Burke, Lord George Lennox, Lord John Cavendish, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, and several others, all of the same size; and he also, in more than once instance, employed him in copying portraits by other painters, for Romney, whose time was not yet fully occupied, took no objection to such work. The portrait of Admiral Keppel was a copy, and the one of George, Lord Anson, which was exhibited in the Guelph Exhibition at the New Gallery in 1891, must have been another, for the sitter had died thirteen years earlier, in 1762, at about the date of Romney's first coming to town.

Soon after Romney had settled in Cavendish Square, Richard Cumberland again called public attention to his friend, with the laudable desire of making his name and work better known to the world. During a tour he had made in the English lake district with Lord Warwick in 1774, he had written an 'Ode to the Sun.' This he published in 1776, together with a second ode addressed to Dr. Robert James, to whose celebrated powders Cumberland attributed his second son's recovery from a dangerous fever, the volume also containing a long dedicatory Epistle to Romney, in which the poet, speaking of the painter's visit to Italy, remarks that 'you carried out with you a disinterested passion for your art, with faculties which this country hath rarely given birth to; and you return from your travels with some specimens of so auspicious a sort, that, when encouragement shall provoke your genius to its full display, we are persuaded you will take rank with the first masters of the highest province and the best age of painting.'

Allan Cunningham, speaking of Hayley's and Cumberland's periodical verses in honour of Romney, says:—'The poetic commendations of his friends, "if they did not," as Gibbon said, "contribute much to his professional prosperity, might be justly called an elegant advertisement of his merit," and were therefore useful, while the titled and the learned saw, or imagined they saw, such striking improvement in the conception and handling of his works, that one of them exclaimed, "His manner of painting is raised beyond

[1] See page 43.

measure by his studies in Italy; his pictures, instead of being cold and heavy, are warm, tender, light and beautiful."'[1]

It was in 1776 that Romney first made the acquaintance of one whose influence over him was to become predominant for the remainder of his life. William Hayley, who was eleven years younger than the painter, was born at Chichester in 1745, and was educated at Eton and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He entered his name at the Middle Temple in 1766, leaving the university in the following year, but soon abandoned all thought of the law as a profession, and devoted himself to poetry. He had been in love with Miss Frances Page for some years, but the engagement was broken off, and in 1769 he married Eliza, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Ball, dean of Chichester. Shortly afterwards his first tragedy, *The Afflicted Father*, was refused by Garrick, and in 1771 his translation of Corneille's *Rodogune*, which he renamed *The Syrian Queen*, suffered in the same way at the hands of George Colman. He professed to find the chief pleasures of life in books, retirement, and congenial friendships, and, in 1774, settled down in his Sussex villa at Eartham. In the following year he published his 'Poetical Epistle on Marriage,' and his 'Ode to Cheerfulness,' addressed respectively to his friends John Thornton and Mrs. Clyfford. As a young man he had displayed some little facility with pencil and brush, and, encouraged by the friendship and instruction of Jeremiah Meyer, R.A., the miniature painter, determined to become an artist; but in 1772 he was obliged to relinquish all hope of continuing his studies, owing to severe inflammation of the eyes, brought on in the first place by exposure to a bitter east wind during a visit paid to Captain Cook on board the *Discovery*, when that ship lay in the Thames. So painting was given up, and literature—always his 'predominant passion'—took its place. There remained, however, the desire for the society and friendship of artists. In 1776, having settled down to a country life, he was anxious to procure, for the decoration of his new home, a few good portraits of his more intimate friends, with whom he had been in the habit, when living in London, of frequent intercourse, and he consulted Meyer, who advised him to go to Romney, as one of whose talents he had the highest opinion; and in this way the long friendship between the two men began.

Whether or not their intimacy was of advantage to Romney it is now somewhat difficult to decide. Hayley had the best of intentions,

[1] Misquoted by Cunningham from Hayley, p. 50, in a paragraph contributed by one of Romney's early friends.

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and was sincerely anxious to do everything in his power to help the painter, whom he at once took under his own particular protection; but he was conceited and interfering, and in many ways his influence was undoubtedly harmful. He certainly encouraged Romney in his indifference to the friendship of his fellow painters, and in his habit of holding aloof from all general artistic society; while, in one instance at least, in his successful attempt to keep Romney from contributing to the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, his influence was so adverse to the painter's best interests that it is not at all easy to forgive him. Meyer, on the other hand, showed his sense in urging Romney to support the new Academic body, and the latter would, no doubt, have done so, if Hayley had not interfered. Romney, with his fanciful suspicions, and nervous irritability, was just the type of man who would have benefited in all ways by more regular intercourse with his fellows; his life would have been happier, and, what was of still greater moment, his art would have gained strength and power from the friendly rivalry of the exhibition room. It is difficult, in reading Hayley's *Life*, to avoid coming to the conclusion that this third-rate poet was something of a toady, and that he presumed upon the friendship, and was anxious to keep his favourite artist to himself as much as possible.

Hayley was constantly begging for, or appropriating, his pictures, for which he rarely offered any payment. His hospitality, no doubt, was hearty and sincere, and Romney's annual visits to his house were of great advantage to his health, his spirits, and, therefore, to his art; but his host was constantly egging him on to undertake big projects—projects which, begun with the utmost enthusiasm, were never carried to completion, and thus were harmful both to the artist and his art. There must, however, have been many engaging qualities in the author of *The Triumphs of Temper*, or he would never have numbered among his personal friends four men of genius like Cowper, Flaxman, Romney, and William Blake, though the last-named soon discovered how shallow were his pretensions to a knowledge of what constituted fine art. He was somewhat puffed up with his reputation as a man of literary and artistic tastes, and gloried in posing as a patron of the arts, but what little posthumous celebrity he still retains is owing to his friendships and not to his verses.

There can be no doubt, however, that most of the men who became intimate with him held him in very high regard. Southey said of him:—'All who knew him, concur in describing his manners as in

the highest degree winning, and his conversation as delightful. It is said that few men have ever rendered so many essential acts of kindness to those who stood in need of them. His errors were neither few nor trifling; but his good qualities greatly preponderated. He was a most affectionate father, a most warm and constant friend.'

The first portrait Romney painted for Hayley was of William Long, of Preshaw, near Bishop's Waltham, who gained great distinction as a surgeon in London. He was about thirty when he sat to the artist, and the two men became very intimate. Long afterwards possessed a number of Romney's works, among them the full-length of 'Lady Hamilton as Circe,' 'Cupid and Psyche,' and 'Henderson as Macbeth.' He was himself an amateur artist, and he attempted to improve the two first-named pictures with singularly infelicitous results, but his handiwork has since been removed from at least one of the originals. These pictures remained in the possession of the Long family until 1890, when thirteen of them were sold at Messrs. Christie's by his descendant, Mr. Walter J. Long, of Preshaw. The most important example, 'Lady Hamilton as Circe,' fetched three thousand eight hundred and fifty guineas. Several of the others were bought in, and five re-appeared at Messrs. Christie's on June 6th, 1896. Long was distantly related by marriage to the Greenes, and his own portrait is now in the possession of Mr. H. Dawson-Greene at Whittington Hall.

The portrait of Long was followed by one of John Thornton, a lawyer, who had been a fellow-student with Hayley at Cambridge; but he died before the painter could put the last touches to the canvas. A third commission was a portrait of the poet himself, for the purpose of which Hayley and his wife spent some weeks in London in 1777.

From the beginning of their friendship Hayley was genuinely anxious as to Romney's health, and did everything that he could to persuade him to take a reasonable amount of exercise and to regulate his hours of work. 'In the first year of my acquaintance with Romney,' he writes, 'I observed, that with admirable faculties for attaining excellence in his art, he had some peculiarities, that threatened to impede his progress; and that he would frequently want the counsel of a frank and faithful monitor, to guard him against those excesses of impetuous and undisciplined imagination, which often lead the fervent votaries of fame to destroy their own powers by

intemperance in study. The first invitation that I sent him to visit my retirement, contained, both in prose and verse, a long and friendly remonstrance against his want of proper attention to his own health.'

Hayley's Sussex home was some six miles from Chichester, and nearly the same distance from Arundel. The house, which was originally a small villa built by his father as a summer residence for his children on an estate he had acquired in 1743, was now of comfortable size, as Hayley, at the time of his marriage, spent a considerable sum in enlarging and improving it, and, in 1774, took up his permanent residence there with his young wife. Six years later he added a large library, built over an arcade, or verandah, which was decorated by Flaxman and Romney.

Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, who went to Eartham when writing his *Life* of the artist, gives an interesting description of its present condition :—

'When visiting Eartham I found the house, although modernised, still retaining many of its original features; the library—a handsome room looking to the south, above the verandah (there is but one storey at Eartham)—much as when, from its windows, Romney and his fellow guests could see the rolling downs, and beyond them the silver sea, with the Isle of Wight like some enchanted isle in a picture by Claude. This library was decorated by Flaxman and Romney; their handiwork is still visible on its walls—but the gallery of portraits painted by Romney of his host and his friends has vanished. The only painting I could find at Eartham from Romney's brush was the turbaned head of Edward Wortley Montagu, taken from the half-length which he painted when he met that eccentric Englishman at Venice, now at Warwick Castle.'

The house was beautifully situated. Cowper, who stayed there in the summer of 1792, wrote most enthusiastically about it to the Rev. Mr. Greatheed :—'Here we are in the most elegant mansion that I ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure-grounds that I have ever seen. . . . It shall suffice me to say that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape, bounded by the sea, and in one part by the Isle of Wight, which also may be seen plainly from the windows of the

library in which I am writing. . . . It is almost a paradise in which we dwell.'

In another letter, addressed to Mrs. Courtenay, he says:—'The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and inclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.'

A picture of the house, as it was in 1892, taken from a photograph, is given in Mr. Thomas Wright's *Life of Cowper*, from which it appears to be a large and comfortable mansion, of no great architectural pretensions, placed amid very delightful scenery. It came subsequently into the possession of the Huskisson family, and is now the residence of Sir Peniston Milbanke.

Romney accepted Hayley's invitation to Eartham, and spent some happy weeks there. This was the first of many similar visits; indeed, for more than twenty years no autumn passed without a journey into Sussex. These weeks spent in the fresh country air were invaluable to one who continually over-worked himself in his town studio. 'He used generally to arrive much exhausted by his professional labor in London,' says his host; 'but the bracing air of a healthy village, and that best medicine of life, sympathetic friendship, so rapidly produced their beneficial effects, that Romney, after a day or two of absolute rest, usually regained all the native energy of his mind; and displayed an eagerness for extensive enterprize in that province of his art, which peculiarly belongs to imagination.'

On these occasions much time was spent in devising subjects for Romney's brush. 'My particular friends of the pencil, Meyer, Romney, and Wright of Derby,' boasts Hayley, 'were all inclined to give me much more credit for intelligence in the theory of painting than I deserved; Wright and Romney especially, who thought I had a facility in selecting, or inventing, new and happy subjects for the pencil, were in the habit of inviting me to *this chace of ideas*. Whenever Romney was my guest, I was glad to put aside my own immediate occupation, whatever it chanced to be, for the pleasure of searching for, and presenting to him, a copious choice of such subjects, as might happily exercise his powers. I have often blamed myself for not preserving some memoranda of the infinite number of sketches,

that my active and rapid friend used to make in his autumnal visits to Eartham: several were on canvas in colours; but the greater number executed very hastily on paper with a pen. His eagerness in multiplying, and collecting these, was extreme; and we were both anxious, that they should attend him on his return to London, because most of them were little more than hasty hints intended to form the ground work of maturer studies in the approaching winter; but every winter brought so much new occupation for the pencil in its train, that I believe the sketches of the autumn were often suffered to sleep in oblivion.'

With the most laudable intention of urging Romney to devote his highest powers to the production of works of imagination, instead of wasting himself in the more lucrative drudgery of portrait painting, Hayley went much too far towards the other extreme. The slightest suggestion was sufficient to set the artist's imagination on fire; and in this way he dashed off countless designs for pictures, many of them of real beauty and feeling, but few of which were ever finished. The inspiration which marked the first conception of a new idea soon became dulled, and Romney lacked the power of concentrated and prolonged effort which is necessary if large and complicated compositions are to be carried to completion. Any small difficulty, such as the want of a suitable model at the right moment, was cause enough to induce him to put the design on one side, never, in spite of the best intentions, to be taken up again; for his fancy was already aflight after some fresh ideal conception, and thus much time was frittered away without tangible result, and with little advantage to his art. With the most ardent desire to paint such subjects—classical, historical, idealistic—and no fear of hard work, Romney yet lacked the concentration necessary for success in what, to him, was the highest branch of painting.

Not strong enough in character to set a limit to his portrait painting sufficient to allow him adequate time in which to devote himself seriously to imaginative work, he yet ruined his health by giving up his nights to such studies; so that most of his Eartham exercises, though at the time an undoubted refreshment and stimulus to his tired brain, were useless, if not absolutely harmful, to him. Hayley, no doubt, unduly encouraged him in this, and while striving with the best intentions to help his friend, was, through a somewhat natural delight in his own fertility of resource in suggesting

subjects from poets and classical authors, merely urging him to the over-exercise of an imagination sadly needing restraint. Greater moderation on Hayley's part would have been most beneficial to Romney's art.

One of their first joint projects was a work on the story of Cupid and Psyche as told by Apuleius, to be versified by Hayley in the fashion of Dryden's *Fables*, and illustrated by Romney, for which the artist made eight cartoons in black chalk.[1] Hayley, however, soon threw the poem aside in favour of his 'Epistles to Romney,' which were written in 1777, and published by Dodsley in the following year, with the purpose of both adding to the reputation of the artist, and to that of the poet and patron. The book, which was issued anonymously, gained some popularity, and was at first attributed to Richard Cumberland.

Hayley, no doubt, is right when he ascribes much of Romney's failure to produce any body of finished imaginative work to his want of a thorough knowledge of anatomy, and to the difficulties he could not altogether overcome in his attempts to draw the human figure with accuracy, which arose through lack of systematic training in his youth. Romney was himself aware of this, and so whenever these difficulties arose—difficulties which did not obtrude themselves in the same way in portrait painting,—he soon became discouraged, and, finally, laid aside the canvas in despair, if not disgust. Certainly, he did not bequeath to posterity that important series of historical paintings which at one time Hayley expected from him with some confidence. His 'magnificent intentions' were greater than his powers of execution.

'Those, who knew him intimately,' writes his friend, 'know, what faculties he possessed for the attainment of excellence in the highest province of art; and they have often lamented that the number, and magnitude, of his historical works must appear so very inadequate, not only to his mental powers, but to his passion for glory, and to the infinite number of hours, that he devoted to the manual exercise of art. . . . The enemies of my friend have imputed it to two causes equally false: first to avarice, which confined him to portraits; and secondly to a deficiency of talent for works of invention:—but it is an honest truth, that Romney loved honor infinitely more than gold; and had received from nature a most creative fancy; but it must be confest, that he had never completely counteracted one defect in his

[1] See page 358.

early education as a painter: he had not thoroughly acquired that mastery in anatomical science, which should enable a great inventive artist to draw the human figure, in all its variations of attitude, with ease and truth, and consequently with delight to himself. It is perhaps a general infirmity in our nature, that man loves to employ himself chiefly in what he can perform with the greatest ease and success. Romney had painted faces so incessantly, and painted them so well, that to paint a new face became one of his peculiar delights. He delighted no less in sketching scenes from fancy; and his invention had all the rapidity, and exuberance, of genius; but he did not equally love the less amusing labor, by which a figure rapidly invented must be slowly ripened into an accurate perfection of form. Hence he produced innumerable portraits, and an astonishing multitude of sketches from fancy; but the hours he devoted to each of these favorite occupations left him not time sufficient to produce many such works of studied invention, as he most wished, and intended to execute in the autumn of life.'

The Rev. John Romney is very bitter in his references to Hayley and to the influence he gained over his father. 'Though Mr. Romney was now in full practice,' he writes, speaking of the publication of 'The Epistles,' 'the acknowledged rival of Sir Joshua, and needed no adventitious aid to increase his celebrity; yet a compliment so flattering did not fail to inspire him with warm feelings of gratitude towards the author, which were soon afterwards ripened into friendship—friendship ardent and confidential on his part. The influence, however, that this connexion had upon Mr. Romney's subsequent life, was in many respects injurious. It is an invidious task to disturb the repose of the dead, and I have no inclination to animadvert upon the character of Mr. Hayley further than as it comes in contact with the life of Mr. Romney. He, however, by writing his own Memoirs, and leaving them for posthumous publication, may in truth be said to have perpetrated that unholy deed himself, and to have set an example for the justification of others. Mr. Hayley's friendship was grounded on selfishness, and the means, by which he maintained it was flattery. By this art he acquired a great ascendency over the mind of Mr. Romney, and knew well how to avail himself of it for selfish purposes. He was able, also, by a canting kind of hypocrisy, to confound the distinctions between vice and virtue, and to give a colouring to conduct, that might, and probably did mislead Mr. Romney on some occasions. He likewise drew him too much from

general society, and almost monopolized him himself, and thus narrowed the circle of his acquaintance and friends. By having intimated an intention of writing Mr. Romney's life, he made him extremely afraid of doing any thing that might give offence. There was a wrong-headedness in the general conduct of Mr. Hayley, arising from the influence of powerful passions, that disqualified him for being a judicious and prudent adviser; yet he was always interfering in the affairs of Mr. Romney, and volunteering his advice: and I have too much reason to believe, that whatever errors the latter may have committed, they were mainly owing to the counsel, or instigation of Mr. Hayley. I will just mention one instance, though certainly of comparatively little importance, yet sufficient to illustrate my assertion. Mr. Hayley admits, that when Meyer, the Royal Academician, so competent to form a just opinion on the subject, endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Romney to exhibit, in order to be admitted a member of that body, he himself used every argument to dissuade him from it, assigning as his motive the *mental peculiarities* of his friend. The covert reason, I have no doubt was, that, as he himself was not favourably disposed towards the Court, he did not wish Mr. Romney to become connected with it. The ostensible motive, however, is certainly absurd: for Mr. Romney's mental peculiarities, by which, I suppose, he means his nervous irritability, and quick susceptibility of feeling, only became an infirmity when his health was impaired by application and age: but, at any time, his natural love of tranquility, and dislike of all squabbles and intrigues, would have guarded him from those disquietudes and vexations, which Mr. Hayley pretends to have foreseen. Did any of such consequences follow on his exhibiting five years before with the chartered Society in Spring Gardens?

'Had he become a R. A. it did not follow that he should have aspired to the President's Chair: though his high professional talents and powerful genius might have justified him in entertaining such ambition; yet, from what I know of the character of his mind, I am sure he would have shunned any such preeminence. He did not seek to gratify vain ambition, his sole object was to excel in his art, and nothing could have arisen from the circumstance of his being a R. A. that would in any respect have ruffled or disturbed his feelings:—but, certainly, many important advantages might have resulted from it. The royal patronage might have been extended to him; at least, his not exhibiting was assigned as a reason why it was not. But the

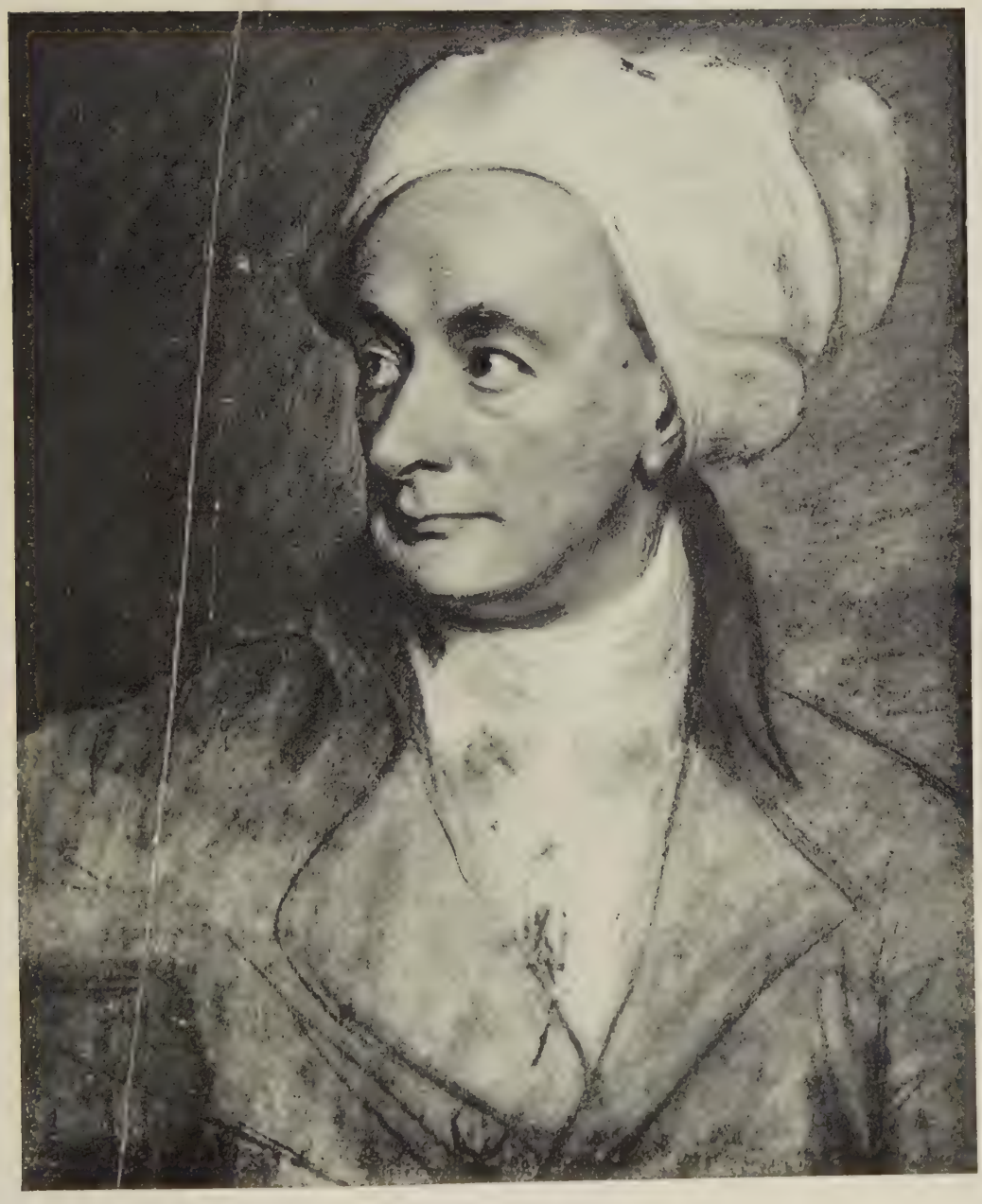
principal advantage would have been, the making his best works familiar to the public, and the leaving a record of their existence; whereas most of them are now hid in obscurity, or only seen by a small domestic circle; and many, perhaps, suffered to perish from not being duly appreciated. It would also have stimulated his exertion, and made him produce a greater number of excellent pictures.'[1]

[1] John Romney, pp. 138-141.

XI

ONE of Romney's earliest commissions, after he had settled down in his new abode, and clients were beginning to seek him out, was from the Hon. Thomas Orde, afterwards Lord Bolton, who was in the habit of visiting the artist, and reading to him passages from the poets which he considered would serve as good subjects for pictures. He requested Romney to paint a 'Mater Dolorosa' for presentation as an altar-piece for the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. Considerable progress had been made with the picture, when the projected gift was forestalled by one from the Earl of Carlisle, who gave an example of Daniele da Volterra for the same purpose; whereupon Mr. Orde abandoned his project, and Romney in this way lost, not only the hundred guineas he was to have received, but much time as well. The unfinished picture was put on one side, and never taken up again. Four studies for it are in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

In 1776 he suffered from an illness which nearly proved fatal. On the 10th of June he went to Drury Lane Theatre for the purpose of seeing Garrick make his farewell appearance on the stage, but the crowd was so great that he was unable to get in. He was caught in the rain while waiting outside, but in spite of this went to the rival theatre, and sat all the evening in his damp clothes. Next day Richard Cumberland found him so ill from the chill, that he sent post haste for Sir Richard Jebb, who promptly ordered him to drink a bottle of Madeira. Sir Richard afterwards told Cumberland that if his advice had been delayed for half an hour longer the painter's life could not have been saved. Garrick had promised to sit to him, and for this reason Romney was anxious to study him while on the stage, and hence his fruitless visit to Drury Lane. This illness caused the abandonment of the portrait, though John Romney goes out of his way to suggest that the real reason was the malevolent influence of Garrick's friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds. For the rest of Romney's life, Sir Richard Jebb attended him without fee, only accepting in return a



WILLIAM COWPER

IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

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LADY HAMILTON AS CONTEMPLATION

IN THE COLLECTION OF LIEUT.-COL. SIR AUDLEY NEELD, BT.

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small drawing of the head of their common friend, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, copied from the large picture painted for Lord Gower. Later on, at Romney's particular request, Jebb sat to him for a half-length portrait, of which the head only was finished. It afterwards became the property of a nephew of Sir Richard's who lived in Ireland.

Romney was already fast becoming one of the favourite portrait-painters of the day, and his merits and defects were discussed in those circles where a knowledge of art was affected. In Fanny Burney's *Diary* there is an echo of this, in an entry dated September 26th, 1778, when she was staying with the Thralesat Streatham:—'The other evening the conversation fell upon Romney, the painter, who has lately got into great business, and who was first recommended and patronised by Mr. Cumberland. "See, Madam," said Dr. Johnson, laughing, "what it is to have the favour of a literary man! I think I have had no hero a great while. Dr. Goldsmith was my last; but I have had none since his time till my little Burney came."'

John Romney prints a long, but incomplete, list of the portraits painted by his father during the years immediately following his return from Italy, among them being many of the finest works he ever accomplished, such as the big group of the children of Lord Gower dancing in a ring, recently removed from Trentham to Stafford House. Others were of the Duchess of Gordon with her son, the Marquis of Huntly; the Clavering children; the Countess of Albemarle and her son, with dogs; Mrs. Stables and her two children; Master and Miss Boone; and Mrs. Morris and her boy. To these must be added a number of others described in a later chapter, including various members of the Cumberland family, and the fine portraits of his friends the Carwardines, of Colne Priory, near Yeldham, Essex. The Rev. Thomas Carwardine, prebendary of St. Paul's, and rector of Earl's Colne and Little Yeldham, was of the same age as the painter, who often visited the Priory, which had come to Carwardine through his marriage in 1771 with Miss Anne Holgate.

One of his most important commissions, with which, from 1776 onwards, he was occupied for five or six years, was a series of portraits of the various members of the family of Earl Gower, afterwards first Marquis of Stafford. Both the Earl and his Countess, and later on their son, Lord Trentham, first Duke of Sutherland, and his wife the Countess of Sutherland, were good friends to the artist. The big dancing group just mentioned contains the portraits of Lady Anne,

who married the Rev. Edward Vernon-Harcourt, a daughter of Lord Gower's second wife (Lady Louisa Egerton), and the four children of the third wife (Lady Susannah Stewart), a boy, Granville Gower, first Lord Granville, and three girls, afterwards the Duchess of Beaufort, Lady Harrowby, and Lady Georgiana Eliot. Romney also painted a fine full-length of Earl Gower, and three-quarter lengths of Lord Trentham and his sister Caroline, afterwards Countess of Carlisle (see Plates V., VI., and VII.), and a lovely half-length of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland.

A most interesting letter, now in the possession of the Countess Granville, from Romney to the Countess Gower, with reference to these portraits, is reproduced in facsimile in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book on the painter, and is given here, with his kind permission :—

'My Lady,—I can with pleasure acquaint your Ladyship (in answer to the letter I have had the honour to receive) that Lady Carlisle's Portrait is finished, and much to my liking; Lord Trentham's will be finished in a day or two, and your ladyship may depend on my sending them on as soon as they are dry and in a condition to be packed up. I have been applyed to by a Mezzotinto engraver to do a print from Lady Carlisle's Portraite, Lord Carlisle consented to the engraver some time ago to have one done from it, if it should meet with your Ladyship's approbation. I believe it would do me much credit, as I thinke it is one of the best Pictures I have painted. If I do not hear from your Ladyship respecting the print, I shall send the pictures as soon as they are ready. Your Ladyship may depend on my Lord's whole length being finished as soon as I possibly can. The picture of the Ladys is at the engraver's and will be advanced with all expedition; the charge will amount to two hundred guineas, forty guineas for each of the Ladys that are dancing, sixty for Lady Ann, and twenty for Mr. Leveson, which charge I hope will meet with your Ladyship's approbation; it is the mode I have established for estimating figures in composition.

'Lady Carlisle's and Lord Trentham's will be thirty six guineas each.—I have the honour to be Your Ladyship's much obliged, and most obedient servant, Geo. Romney

'London, August 12th, 1780.'

By this time his reputation already stood high in popular favour,

and his pictures were in demand by the engravers. In 1777 Johann Jacobé, the Viennese engraver, came to England, and remained for some years, reproducing several of the works both of Reynolds and Romney in mezzotint. Among the latter were portraits of Edward Chamberlayne, Lord George Germaine, afterwards Viscount Sackville, and William Hayley.

The first visit paid by John Romney to his father's new house was in January 1777, when he discovered him working in the evening by lamp-light upon a composition of numerous small figures, the subject being 'The Accusation of Susannah by the two Elders.' Romney was in the habit of working at night in this way, in spite of the great strain upon his eyes, and the injurious effect upon his health.

In this year Hayley wrote his 'Epistles to Romney' already mentioned. 'The main object of this poem,' remarks the complacent author, 'was to encourage the just ambition of the painter; to persuade him not to waste too large a portion of life in the lucrative drudgery of his profession; but to aspire to the acquisition of practical excellence in the highest department of his art.'[1]

Romney was always delighted when any of his literary acquaintances took the trouble to provide him with good subjects from the poets. One of these friends was Dr. Potter, translator of the Greek tragedians, who, in 1779, when writing to acknowledge the safe arrival of his portrait, which Romney had painted and given to him, speaks of a scene from *Alcestis*, which the artist had suggested as a good subject, and offers to send him a translation of the passage in question. A second letter, in the following year, speaks of the publishing of his translation of Euripides. 'My daughter sent me word that she left my rude copy of the *Bacchae* at your house; I do not apprehend that it can afford you any scene for a picture. I am now at work upon the Iphigenia at Aulis, which I hope to finish before I come to town: if you wish to have the scene of her sacrifice, I will bring it with me, and that of Polyxena, which is very fine.' Romney read Dr. Potter's translation of Aeschylus with the greatest delight, and was much impressed with the boldness and sublimity of the poet's subjects, and their suitability for heroic painting.

Another acquaintance who tried to help him in this way was the translator of the *Lusiad*, William Julius Mickle, the Scottish poet, who thought, not knowing that Romney had already attempted it,

[1] Hayley reprinted these Epistles at the end of his *Life of Romney*, where the date of their first publication is given as 1788, not 1778, but this is evidently a printer's error.

that the death of David Rizzio in the presence of Mary, Queen of Scots, would be an excellent subject for a painter 'who could blend the tender and terrific.' He also wrote offering a version of the Apparition seen at the Cape of Good Hope from Vasco da Gama's ships, as described by Camoens, and suggested a second subject from the *Lusiad*—the crowning of the skeleton of the beautiful Inez—to which Lord Hardwicke had already called Romney's attention.

About this time, 1779, Romney, whenever a sitter failed to keep an appointment, was busily at work on two important designs—'The Ghost of Darius' and 'Atossa's Dream'—but his many commissions allowed him no opportunity of making any serious attempt to complete them as pictures while the first fine glow of his imagination lasted.

One of his sitters this year, 1779, was the lovely Henrietta Vernon, Countess of Warwick; and Hayley, to use his own words, wrote a flattering poem in praise of the picture, 'with a view of gratifying his friend Romney, by obtaining permission to have a mezzotint taken from his exquisite portrait of that beautiful lady, a request that for just reasons was civilly declined.'[1] The verses are printed in John Romney's *Life*. Romney painted her again some years later with her two children.

Hayley mentions several works—'offsprings of friendship'—by which he means that he begged them as gifts from the painter, which were done in 1780. These included a drawing in water-colours of his 'friends at Eartham,'[2] a small portrait of himself in the same medium, and a design, which was engraved by Bartolozzi, to accompany an ode written by Hayley in honour of Howard, the prison philanthropist. Hayley himself was much pleased with this ode, which he read to his friends whenever opportunity arose. In the previous December he was anxious that Dr. Cotton, the physician, and an acquaintance of Howard's, should sit to Romney for his portrait. In return he offered to read the poem to him, and the doctor was so 'infinitely pleased with it' that he consented to be painted. Hayley writes all this to his wife with great satisfaction, adding that both John Thornton and Romney admire it exceedingly, 'so your Pindaric humble servant is of course *in the clouds*.' Romney, says his host, had a great desire to paint a series of pictures 'to express his veneration for the character of Howard, and

[1] In spite of this refusal, the picture was engraved by John Raphael Smith, and published March 3rd, 1780.

[2] See page 122.

to display the variety of relief, that his signal benevolence afforded to the sufferings of the wretched.' Howard, however, resisted all attempts made by Hayley to induce him to sit for his portrait, but he suggested several incidents of human misery, seen during his visitations to foreign prisons, which he thought might be suited to the artist's pencil. Romney made a number of hasty studies with the intention of painting one or two large pictures from them; nine of these sketches are in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and there are a number of others in a sketch-book in the possession of Mr. Lawrence Romney.

During Romney's autumn visit to Eartham in this year, 1780, Hayley was busily engaged upon his poem, *The Triumphs of Temper*, the most successful of all his writings. 'His observation of the various effects of spleen on the female character,' he explains somewhat pompously in his own *Memoirs*, 'induced him to believe that he might render an important service to social life, if his poetry could induce his young and fair readers to cultivate the gentle qualities of the heart, and maintain a constant flow of good humour.' It was written with great speed, three cantos being finished in September. The presence of his now bosom friend Romney stimulated him to great exertions, and he was also helped by watching 'the progress of rising affection between a couple of his friends, whom the artist painted, into a connubial attachment.' He finished the poem in London before the end of the year, in Spring Gardens, where Mr. Edmund Antrobus had lent him his house for a month. The book, when published, had an instantaneous success, and many of the sentimental young ladies of the day modelled their behaviour upon that of its heroine Serena. Every one in society felt obliged to read it, and the Duchess of Devonshire, to whom Hayley dedicated a volume of plays in 1784, is said by Gibbon to have been, by her enthusiasm, one of the chief causes of the book's popularity. Romney's various pictures of 'Serena' will be described later on. The date of them is usually given as some years later than 1780, but there can be little doubt that one of them at least was begun, if not finished, at the time when the poet was at work by his side, reading aloud the result of each day's labour. It was just the stimulus in which Romney most delighted, and his sitter may perhaps have been the lady—unfortunately unnamed by Hayley—whose love affairs the two older men had been watching with such interest.

In January 1781, Lord Chancellor Thurlow first sat to Romney, at the request of Lord Gower. The artist's portraits had now become so popular, that the new sitter merely voiced the public opinion when he

exclaimed, 'Reynolds and Romney divide the town: I am of the Romney faction!' This, according to Hayley, was a sally of sportive vivacity, and not a declaration of serious preference. Lord Thurlow had already sat to Reynolds, and, as a man of taste, must have appreciated the President's performance; but he had a real personal liking for Romney, the man, as well as for his painting, and when he had once overcome the latter's nervous shyness, he enjoyed discussions with him upon questions of art, and the suitability of fine passages from the great poets as subjects for an artist's brush.

C. R. Leslie, in his *Handbook for Young Painters*, suggests a reason for the Lord Chancellor's preference:—

'In Romney's whole-length the Chancellor appeared a more handsome man than in the half-length of Reynolds. Romney avoided all indication of the suppressed temper that was so apt to explode in violent paroxysms, and this rendered his picture more acceptable to the original. But he missed what Reynolds alone could give—that extraordinary sapience which made Charles Fox say, "No man could be so wise as Lord Thurlow looked."'[1]

The Chancellor had suggested to Reynolds, when sitting to him, that the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, as told by Virgil, would make an excellent subject for a picture, but Sir Joshua did not fall in with the idea, and from that time the Chancellor is said to have thought less of his genius. He now expressed a strong desire that Romney should paint for him a work from the same source, and translated the whole episode for his use. Romney's imagination was at once fired, and he made a number of designs, in most of which Orpheus was represented with arms extended in the attempt to embrace Eurydice at the moment she is snatched from him. Three of these sketches are in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and three fine cartoons in the Liverpool Royal Institution.[2] He began the picture itself, but the Chancellor's conception of the way in which the legend should be treated on canvas was so diametrically opposed to the painter's own version of it, that Romney, fearing the result would never satisfy his patron, soon relinquished the project altogether; and, in the end, it was destroyed, with many another unfinished canvas, by damp and neglect, in the house he built for himself at Hampstead towards the end of his life. Lord Thurlow, however, purchased from him one of

[1] Romney's portrait of Lord Thurlow is now in Stafford House, and is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's *Life* of the artist.

[2] See page 358.

the versions of 'Serena,' and commissioned him to paint the portraits of his two small daughters, the beautiful group now in the Byers Collection in America.

In speaking of Lord Thurlow's desire to possess the 'Orpheus' picture, and his failure to induce either Reynolds or Romney to undertake it in the manner in which he wished, John Romney again takes up the cudgels in defence of his father against Sir Joshua. 'I maintain,' he declares, 'and am not afraid of avowing it, because I feel I am right,—that Mr. Romney, when in the meridian of his powers, was capable of painting a picture of higher excellence than Reynolds. . . . Mr. Romney's narrow circumstances, however, constrained him to devote the best hours of his life to portrait-painting; so that he had not those fine opportunities which Reynolds had, who soon became affluent, of directing his studies to works of imagination; yet still he did enough to establish his character as an historical painter of the first rank.' This is mere filial exaggeration. Romney had opportunity enough for historical painting, if he could have concentrated his energies upon one such picture at a time, but as each new idea sprang into life in his brain, he could not resist the temptation to lay aside the work then in hand to be finished later on, while he busied himself with the fresher vision his imagination had conjured up.

In 1781 he painted a 'three-quarters' portrait of the beautiful Emily Bertie, the mistress of a Mr. Pott, who took her with him to India, where they both died. He also began a full-length of her in a recumbent position, which was never finished, afterwards cutting out the head, which he gave to his pupil, Isaac Pocock. Sir Joshua's picture of 'Thais' also represented this lady. In the same year Romney painted the portrait of Dr. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of Chester.

XII

THIS is not the place in which to give at any great length an account of the life and adventures of the lovely, fascinating and unhappy Lady Hamilton, who, in 1782, first came into Romney's life, a vision of vivacious youth and beauty, at a time when he had reached the high-water mark of his capabilities as a painter, and inspired him with an increased ardour for the pursuit of the art to which he had given up almost everything that makes for happiness in ordinary lives. His 'divine lady' as he grew to call her, was only a passing episode in his life, but the impression that she left on him was deep and lasting. For the better part of four years she was a frequent visitor to his painting-room, until she left England for Naples; but, from that day, Romney only saw her for a short period some seven years later, when she returned home for the purpose of marrying Sir William Hamilton, and, for a month or two, renewed the fire in the artist's breast. Bursting upon him in all her young and entrancing loveliness of person and gaiety of spirits, she at once became his ideal of womanly beauty, and the model from whom he most delighted to paint.

She is thus described by one who has made a study of her life:—'The owner of two lovely blue eyes, one of which was remarkable for a brown spot that, instead of showing like a defect, gave additional piquancy to her glances, this girlish creature was fortunate in the delicate dignity of her profile, the ineffable tenderness of what Gavin Hamilton styled her "beautiful and uncommon mouth," and the exuberance of her rich auburn tresses—deep brown, toned with scarcely perceptible redness—that on being unlooped fell from her head literally to her heels. These were only some of the elements of her historic beauty. Her smiles were poetry, and their effect on those who regarded her, when she was talking to her companions with her usual frankness and animation, was heightened by the qualities of a voice that could plead in the softest of persuasive accents, though musical connoisseurs spoke most often of its strength and melodious richness. Whilst recognising the peculiar

charms of her "beautiful and unusual" mouth, most admirers of this lovely girl spoke with lively enthusiasm of the air of serene and virginal goodness that clothed her countenance in its peaceful moments. This air, so expressive of girlish simplicity and innocence, accorded with her nature, but was, alas! at painful discord with one already remote passage of her earlier story. To regard her, in ignorance of the lamentable circumstances of her career, was to recall the lines:

> "O welcome, pure-eyed faith, white-handed hope,
> Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemish'd form of chastity!"

But to remember the saddest incidents of her life was to recall a story which had often caused women to turn from her with signs of abhorrence, and even to this hour exposes her apologists to odious imputations."[1]

J. T. Smith, who met her when he was a youth, says, in his entertaining volume, *A Book for a Rainy Day*,—'This generous woman, better known under the lawful title of Lady Hamilton, when I showed her my etching of the funeral procession of her husband's friend, the immortal Nelson, fainted and fell into my arms; and, believe me, reader, her mouth was equal to any production of Greek sculpture I have yet seen.'

Amy Lyon, or Emma Hart, as she afterwards called herself, was the daughter of a blacksmith, one Henry Lyon, of the hamlet of Denhall in the parish of Great Neston, Cheshire. The date of her birth was almost certainly April 26th, 1765, and she was baptized about a fortnight later, on May 12th, a few weeks before the death of her father.[2] Her mother, on becoming a widow, crossed the river Dee, and took up her residence among her own people in her native parish of Hawarden. Amy's parentage was thus decent though humble, and a degree above the lowest class of peasantry. At about the age of thirteen she entered the service of Mr. Thomas of Hawarden, a brother-in-law of Alderman Boydell, as nursery-maid. In her sixteenth year she went to London, and shortly afterwards was employed in the household of Dr. Budd, a well-known surgeon, of Chatham Place, Blackfriars. She was already of unusual beauty, and her vanity was fed by the admiration it caused, wherever she went; and it was this, undoubtedly, which caused her undoing. Instead of settling down to

[1] J. Cordy Jeaffreson, *The Queen of Naples and Lord Nelson*, vol. i. p. 147.
[2] Walter Sichel, *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, 1905, p. 39.

quiet service under the roof of the worthy doctor, she became restless and left. 'Changing her places, and staying long in no one of them,' says Mr. Jeaffreson, 'she ripened quickly for ruin.' For some time her movements are uncertain, and difficult to trace in proper order. She is said to have served in a shop as waitress for a month or two, from which she was tempted by a 'lady of fashion' to act as her companion, and to be introduced to society, of a sort, as a young gentlewoman, whereby her vanity was still further fed. It is also supposed that she acted as servant to Mrs. Lindley of Drury Lane Theatre for a short period. There is, however, no certainty, and probably very little truth about these rumours. She seems to have been miserably poor, and to have found it difficult to gain a livelihood. In any case, she fell a victim to a young naval officer, to whom she went, so the story runs, to plead for the release of a friend who had been captured by the press-gang. This was Captain, afterwards Rear-Admiral John Willet-Payne.

'The brief *liaison* ended before the simpleton was a mother. It was a seaman's last frolic on shore, before he went off to serve his country on the deep. A few months later, Amy Lyon was clothed with shame, and was weeping over the infant, to which she had given birth, when she can scarcely have completed her seventeenth year.' The child was sent to Hawarden, and the girl then entered upon the darkest moments of her chequered life.

Unable to obtain a place in any respectable household, she is said to have drifted into the employment of that notorious quack, Dr. Graham, whose 'Temple of Aesculapius' was removed from the Adelphi to Schomberg House, Pall Mall, in 1781, where he became Gainsborough's neighbour. It must have been at the former place, if at all, that Emma was exhibited as 'Hygeia, the rosy goddess of Health,' to the rank and fashion of London, who flocked to his lectures and *séances*. Here, again, there is no real proof that she was so employed, and still less that she displayed her charms as recklessly as the scandalous chronicles relate. She may have posed as a draped statue of Hygeia; but Graham's later attraction, 'Hebe Vestina,' was not included in his programme until the year after he had removed to Pall Mall, in 1782, when Emma's presence elsewhere is well authenticated. In 1783 Graham was in Edinburgh, and was committed to the Tolbooth, and his exhibition seems to have come to a final close in the following year.

In the introduction to the catalogue of the Romney Exhibition, held in the Grafton Gallery in 1900, this legend is repeated with

THE BOSANQUET FAMILY

IN THE COLLECTION OF MAJOR BOSANQUET

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FLAXMAN MODELLING THE BUST OF HAYLEY

IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

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emphasis. 'The fact of Emma's connection with this exhibition stands uncontradicted; on the contrary, it is supported by the testimony of Cosway, Tresham, and Hone, and the lovely drawings they made from her person. Flaxman is also allowed to have perpetuated her lovely figure in marble. Where is it now? The drawing attributed to Romney by the owner, (here exhibited), whoever it may be by, is a veritable masterpiece, and the admiration of the medical profession, from the knowledge of anatomy it reveals.'

The drawing in question, No. 90, was lent by Sir John G. Tollemache Sinclair, Bart., and was said in a note to be 'attested by manuscript in the autograph of an eminent artist, living at the time of the exhibition (Graham's), now in the possession of Mr. Nash, annotator of this catalogue.' It was a pity that this manuscript was not printed, and the name of the eminent artist given. In its absence the note can hardly be accepted as proof that Romney ever made a nude study of Lady Hamilton. The drawing itself is a careful and conscientious study of a rather plump and matronly woman, and might have been made by Romney, though most probably it is not by him; in any case, if done at the date suggested, about 1782, it could not have been a study from the slim and youthful Emma.[1] Romney, with all his fine qualities, never produced a drawing from the nude which displayed a masterly knowledge of anatomy; it was just this want of a perfect acquaintance with the mechanism of the human form which was the weakest point in his artistic armour. Certainly the few studies from the nude, preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, are not of a kind to win the complete 'admiration of the medical profession.' No references were given in the catalogue to the testimony of Cosway, Tresham, and Hone, or information as to where the 'lovely drawings' they made from her undraped person are to be seen, and in the absence of such information the whole story must be regarded as a myth. Henry Tresham was in Italy from 1775 to 1789, so that he, in any case, can have made no such drawings.

Either before or after this Graham episode, if it ever occurred, which, as has been pointed out, is doubtful,—during which time Romney may have seen her, as the artists were in the habit of visiting his somewhat scandalous exhibition, with its mud baths and 'Celestial Bed,'—she lived for a time with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, both in London and at his country seat of Up Park, in Sussex. Sir Harry may or may not have met her for the first time at Graham's, and have

[1] If by Romney, it is much more likely to be one of the studies he made in Rome. See page 69.

taken her away from there. These were her days of wildest gaiety, when she already gave signs of that skill in mimicry for which she afterwards became famous, and 'delighted the baronet's friends with her vivacious temper, her racy prattle, and her equestrian address,' which attracted such outspoken admiration from some of the visitors to Up Park that in December 1781 Sir Harry, probably with due cause, packed her off very hurriedly to Hawarden, with next to nothing in her pocket, just as she was on the point of becoming a mother. Her behaviour, however, cannot have been very outrageous, as later in life, after Nelson's death, when her friends were few, Sir Harry was in the habit of sending her presents of fruit, flowers, and game, and of writing letters to her couched in friendly terms, with the object of cheering her in her retirement. It is not true that, after leaving Up Park, she was compelled for a living to display her charms to painters, as Allan Cunningham alleged, in order that they might be the better able to put art to vile uses; nor did she ever stand as a nude model to students at the Royal Academy. She hastened to Hawarden, in disgrace and despair, only anxious to hide her shame from the world.

Repeated applications for help sent from Hawarden to Sir Harry had no effect, and the despairing girl turned in her distress to one who had no doubt admired her, and had probably made love to her, at Up Park. This was Charles Greville, to whom she wrote: 'I am allmost distracktid. I have never hard from Sir H. and he is not at Lechster now, I am sure. I have wrote 7 letters, and no anser. What shall I dow? Good God what shall I dow? . . . I can't come to town for want of mony. I have not a farthing to bless my self with, and I think my friends looks cooly on me. I think so. O G. what shall I dow? What shall I dow? O how your letter affected me when you wished me happiness. O G. that I was in your posesion or in Sir H., what a happy girl would I have been! Girl indeed! What else am I but a girl in distres—in reall distres? For God's sake, G. write the minet you get this, and only tell me what I am to dow? . . . I am allmos mad. O for God's sake tell me what is to become on me. O dear Grevell, write to me. Write to me. G. adue, and believe yours for ever, EMLY HART.'

No doubt the good people of Hawarden looked upon her with far from friendly eyes, but, happily, Greville answered her appeal and came to her assistance. Charles Francis Greville was the second son of the first Earl of Warwick and brother of the second Earl, who became, thanks to the introduction of Richard Cumberland, a good

friend and patron to George Romney. Greville was a young man of some character, cautious and even pedantic in nature, and though moving in the highest ranks of society and indulging to a moderate extent in those free habits of living which were almost universal when George IV. was Prince of Wales, his life was yet a sober and reputable one as compared with those of most of the young men about town of his day. His income, five hundred pounds a year, small even for a second son, was hardly sufficient to keep up his position as a member of Parliament, and to enable him to support his reputation as a connoisseur of art. He was already deeply in debt, and the addition of Emma Hart—as she now called herself—to his household still further hampered him.

His friend Lady Craven, afterwards Margravine of Anspach, sings his praises in her entertaining memoirs. 'Sir William Hamilton's nephew, Mr. Charles Greville, next brother to the Earl of Warwick, possessed, like his uncle, a superior mind, with an elegant taste for the fine arts, but which he had indulged too much for the narrow limits of his fortune. He was so much admired by the King, that when he went to lay down his office of Treasurer of the Household (a place which was personally in the gift of his Majesty unconnected by the ministry), the King himself kindly urged him not to take so unnecessary a measure,—nor would his Majesty accept his resignation but with the greatest discussion. His high sense of honour was so great, that, although his friends added their persuasions to those of the King, he could not be induced to retain a place, when his sentiments no longer coincided with his duty. He withdrew immediately into private life; and in consequence of his retirement, many of his leisure hours were bestowed upon me.'

The four years during which Emma Hart associated with him, in a small house in Edgware Row, near Paddington Green, were of undoubted benefit to her. He had saved her from imminent ruin, and she was proportionately grateful to him. She accepted all the restrictions he imposed upon her, as to seemliness of behaviour, loyalty to himself, and the many niceties of conduct which his fastidiousness demanded. She gladly carried out his wishes, and in so doing regained something of her self-respect. At their home she met a very different society from that of Up Park—only Greville's closest friends having admittance—men of character, who always treated her with the respect due to a gentlewoman. 'The Edgware Row establishment was modest in both senses of the word. He brought reputable friends to

the house, and a few neighbouring ladies seem to have called. The household expenses did not exceed some £100 a year. Emma's own yearly allowance was only about £30, and she lived well within it.'[1]

Out of his meagre income he did all that he could to educate her, and to bring out her best qualities, providing her with a piano, and singing and music masters, and endeavouring to share with her his enthusiasm for the fine arts. She, in return, became greatly attached, and in the end, deeply in love with him. He undertook the maintenance of her child, 'little Emma,' while her mother was allowed to come to live with her under the name of Mrs. Cadogan. Greville, on his side, was of a jealous disposition, and she herself told Romney that on one occasion he was so irritated by the attention she attracted at Ranelagh that she never afterwards accompanied him to any public place of entertainment, and put aside all fashionable costume, wearing mostly the dress of a lady's maid for the remainder of the time she lived with him.

Early in 1782 Greville brought this radiant creature to Romney's studio to sit for her portrait. She captivated the artist at once, for he saw in her the personification of his highest ideal of human loveliness, and could not help falling before her fascinating manners and engaging ways. His artistic soul was at once fired with enthusiasm, and it soon became his one ambition to portray her in every attitude and character that his vivid imagination could conjure up. She, in her turn, was glad to come to his studio, and to serve as his model—always in company with her mother, says punctilious John Romney. No doubt time would hang a little heavily on her hands in the small house in Edgware Row, when Greville was absent upon his duties at the Board of Admiralty or his pleasures, and the painting-room made an agreeable break in the monotony of her days. Her vanity was excited both by his evident delight in painting her, and by seeing her charms displayed upon innumerable canvases by the brush of one of the three leading painters of the day. Romney's natural reserve fell away in her presence, and they soon became fast friends.

The two had much in common. They came from neighbouring provinces, and both sprang from a sturdy yeoman race. It is said that both spoke with something of the same twang, and that in speech and handwriting there was great similarity between them, though Romney, of course, lacked her fluency of phrase, and only expressed himself with perfect ease through his brush. Her vivacity and gaiety, and the

[1] W. Sichel, p. 57.

unschooled exuberance of her spirits, drew him out of himself, and roused him, for the time, from his shy, silent, and dejected moods. She had, indeed, the power of fascinating all men, and most women, over whom she wished to cast her spells, and Romney, reserved as he was, was no exception to the rule. She looked upon him as a fellow-exile from the North, and treated him as a close and dear friend, pouring into his willing ears her troubles and her ambitions with a frankness due to her knowledge of his complete sympathy and understanding. To him she 'first opened her heart,' as she told him in a letter from Italy some ten years later.

Irrespective of her wonderful beauty, she must have been one of the finest models who ever sat to painter. Graceful in every movement, she possessed the power of adapting herself with ease to any pose the painter demanded of her, and the extraordinary mobility of her features permitted her to assume any character, at a moment's notice. Gifted with an imagination, she could, in turn, personify all passions and emotions. This power was largely increased under Romney's constant suggestion, and it was in his studio that she first began to perfect herself in those 'Attitudes' which afterwards became so famous when performed by her in the drawing-rooms of society both in London and Naples.

Romney painted her in a great variety of characters, both from tragedy and comedy, and from classical story or in allegorical guise. He depicted her both as a Bacchante and as a Nun, as Nature, Simplicity, Comedy, Alope, Ariadne, Cassandra, Joan of Arc, Sensibility, Diana, Euphrosyne, a Spinstress, St. Cecilia, Contemplation, and many other characters.

Her visits to the painting-room were so frequent, and the artist's enthusiasm so great, that their friendship was bound to attract comment of an unflattering nature. In days when evil motives were imputed with a freedom which, happily, has become more restrained in modern times, and quite undeterred by all lack of real evidence, such an intimacy was not likely to be ignored by malicious scandal-mongers. The earlier history of Emma Hart, as far as it was known, embellished with fantastic exaggerations, was sufficient in itself to set tongues wagging—and when, in addition, there was on one side a lady of such antecedents, and on the other a man who had lived away from his own wife for more than twenty years—the case was already proved in the eyes of London society, without need of further evidence.

These innuendoes were voiced with direct brutality, about a decade

after the painter's death in the *Memoirs of Lady Hamilton*, which had a scandalous success when published in 1815. In them the anonymous author declares that Romney's 'propensities to sensual indulgence were well known to all his acquaintance.' This, as far as can be gathered from all ascertained facts of his life, is a cruel slander. Everything that is known about him tends to prove that, at a period when loose living was regarded with singular leniency, Romney was a clean liver in every sense of the word, and was only intemperate in one direction —his devotion to his art. No one of his personal friends has written a single sentence about him which points to the slightest irregularity of conduct on his part—the one great blot on his character, his desertion of his wife, being the only sin of this description that can be urged against him.

On the other hand, some of his biographers and certain modern writers go to the opposite extreme, holding that the tie between Lady Hamilton and Romney was merely one of sincere friendship, and that the artist's feelings towards his sitter were those of an affectionate father to a daughter. Such an explanation seems too idealistic to be the true one, when all the facts of the case, and the characters of the two actors, are considered.

Romney's feelings for the fair Emma were, no doubt, somewhat mixed ones. His admiration for her beauty, which excited his imagination and gave an added fluency to his brush and a completer sweetness to his colour, was great from the beginning, and increased as the years went on, for he felt that in her he had found a source of inspiration by means of which he could at length give a perfect expression to the artistic passion which burned within him. But his regard for the woman herself, quite irrespective of his art, grew just as steadily, and there seems little question that he gradually became deeply attached to her. This love never found more direct expression than in the many canvases upon which he depicted his appreciation of her outward charms and the fascinating variety of her moods. It was, indeed, largely an ideal love. He, like a true artist, worshipped her beauty, and there was little that was sensual in his feeling for her. He had a passion for beauty as beauty, but was a man of pure mind. This the quick-witted Emma soon recognised, and by reason of it she trusted him. It is true that after a time he became restless and unhappy whenever she missed coming to the studio, and that any fancied coldness on her part threw him into a fever of apprehension. In this, perhaps, may be traced the man predominating over the artist; but

however deep the feeling may have been it never found expression in words except in a few agitated notes to Hayley, in which he reveals, quite unconsciously, an admiration, and a despair, which, in most cases of a like nature, would be regarded as the characteristics of a lover. To Emma herself he never gave expression to this feeling.

Emma, who owed a deep debt of gratitude to Greville, was at this time sincerely devoted to him, anxious to please him in every way, and careful of her conduct in that nothing she did should wound his somewhat precise and circumspect nature. It has been pointed out already that he was of a jealous disposition, and was very strongly attached to her, and he would have forbidden her visits to the studio upon the slightest suspicion of a too ardent regard between the painter and his mistress. Emma's own feelings are not likely to have been warmer than those of ordinary friendship, and she was possibly quite sincere when she spoke of Romney as her 'more than father.' It gave her the liveliest pleasure to sit constantly for her portrait, more especially to a painter who was so much the talk of the town ; and Romney's appreciation of her quickness in seizing his ideas, and his praise of the gracefulness of her posing and the mobility of her expression, made a strong appeal to her vanity. Eager for admiration, it was natural that she should be attracted by the evident enthusiasm she inspired in one who was as a rule exceptionally reserved in character. Beyond some such feelings as these, the future Lady Hamilton is not likely to have gone in her intimacy with the painter. Her letters to Greville from Italy in 1786, during the early days of her residence in Naples, show that he was then the only man who occupied her thoughts. It was Romney's art that had brought them together, and beyond this there was little on her side but that mutual bond of sympathy which such constant artistic intercourse would produce. Romney was a man of fifty, and in appearance and manners not one upon whom a lively, high-spirited girl of twenty, accustomed to receive attention and admiration wherever she went, would be likely to look with favour as a lover. As she grew to know him better, and to get behind that reserve which only his few intimate friends were ever privileged to see completely thrown aside, she must have learned to appreciate the man himself, as well as his art ; but this appreciation went no further than friendship. Romney, on the other hand, was wounded more deeply. Her absence in Italy for six years made no difference to the depth of his feelings, or, if time had a little dulled them, they were revived with all their old, or even greater intensity, when she returned to England for a few months in 1791.

Hayley, in speaking of certain of Romney's ideal pictures for which the future Lady Hamilton was the model, says, with great 'gusto,' as he himself would put it:—'In executing some of these, he had the great advantage of studying the features, and the mental character, of a lady, on whom nature had lavished such singular beauty, and such extraordinary talents, as have rendered her not only the favorite model of Romney, whom she honored with her filial tenderness, and esteem, but the idolized wife of an accomplished ambassador.'

'The high and constant admiration,' he goes on, 'with which Romney contemplated the personal, and mental endowments of this lady, and the gratitude he felt for many proofs of her friendship, will appear in passages from his letters, describing some memorable incidents, when their recent and pleasing impression on his mind and heart gave peculiar vivacity to his description. The talents, which nature bestowed on the fair Emma, led her to delight in the two kindred arts of Music, and Painting. In the first she acquired great practical ability; for the second she had exquisite taste, and such expressive powers, as could furnish to an historical painter, an inspiring model for the various characters, either delicate, or sublime, that he might have occasion to represent. Her features, like the language of Shakespeare, could exhibit all the feelings of nature, and all the gradations of every passion, with a most fascinating truth, and felicity of expression. Romney delighted in observing the wonderful command she possessed over her eloquent features, and thro' the surprising vicissitudes of her destiny she ever took a generous pride in serving him as a model; her peculiar force and variations of feeling, countenance, and gesture, inspirited and ennobled the productions of his art.'

John Romney, though mainly occupied in defending his father against the imputations which were cast upon him, endeavours, without the enthusiasm of Hayley, to be just to the lady, and, in sketching her character and appearance, speaks of the prudence and discretion of her behaviour during the four years she was under the protection of Charles Greville, when her conduct was in every respect correct, and very different from her life after she was married to Sir William Hamilton. 'Far be it from me, however, to become her apologist; but as I know that her conduct in the former part of her life has been misrepresented, and that many extravagant stories have been told of her, implicating Mr. Romney, which have not the shadow of foundation; it is no more than common charity and justice to state such circumstances as will

place her character in its true light. In all Mr. Romney's intercourse with her she was treated with the utmost respect, and her demeanour fully entitled her to it. In the characters in which she has been represented, she only sat for the face and a slight sketch of the attitude; and the drapery was painted either from other models, or from the layman. The only figure that displayed any licentiousness of dress, was the Bacchante; and it was as modest as the nature of the character would admit of; but in this she only sat for the face. There is no doubt but the talent of representing characters by action, and by the expression of countenance, which she afterwards displayed with so much success when Lady Hamilton, was acquired when she sat to Mr. Romney, she being requested to imitate those powerful emotions of the mind which he wished to paint. It was a great gratification to her, to sit as a model; it amused her, and flattered her vanity. From the peculiarity of her situation she was excluded from society, justly excluded; and the only resources she had for amusement in her loneliness, were reading and music at home, and coming once or twice a week to sit for her picture. She always had a hackney coach to bring and take her away; and she never appeared in the streets without her mother.'

The first picture Romney painted of her was the beautiful three-quarter length, in which she is represented with a small spaniel under her arm, known now by the somewhat absurd title of 'Lady Hamilton as Nature' (see Plate VIII.). This picture was purchased at Sir William Hamilton's sale by Mr. Lister Parker, and is now in the possession of Mr. Charles Wertheimer.

The full-length portrait of her in the character of 'Circe' was begun at about the same time. Hayley mentions a letter from a friend in that year (1782), describing the powerful impression it made upon a party of people who went to see it in the studio. It remained in the painter's possession for some years, when, says the bard of Eartham, 'an opulent nobleman discovered a faint inclination to purchase it, but it was reserved for a purchaser of superior taste.' The picture was never finished, because Romney found it impossible at the time to find models for the animals. Afterwards it was decided that Gilpin was to put them in, but for some reason he never did so. Later on, William Long, the surgeon, who became the owner of the work, and, as already noted, was an amateur artist of more pretension than capability, endeavoured to supply the deficiency; and, in more recent years, a not very successful attempt has been made to remove his handiwork.

This picture, which was sold at Messrs. Christie's in 1890 for 3850 guineas, is now in the collection of the Hon. Herbert C. Gibbs.

Miss Seward mentions the 'Circe' in a letter to Mr. F. N. C. Mundy, on October 10th, 1787, on the subject of poetry, in which she says:—'Merely to jingle common-place ideas in rhyme, may be easy enough; but to make fine sense, animated and appropriate description, and beautiful imagery, recline gracefully on that Procrustean bed, is about as easy as to compose music like Handel or Haydn, and to paint like Reynolds, Romney, and Fuseli. When Mrs. Knowles, who knows the difficulties and the merits of the pencil, saw Romney's Circe, she exclaimed, "What a number of bad, indifferent, moderate, good, and very good pictures must the hand paint, ere it attains the sublimity of that figure!"' This lady was Dr. Johnson's 'fair Quakeress.'

No attempt will be made here to give a complete list of the many pictures Romney painted from his 'divine lady,' and the still greater number of studies he began, often from memory, but never finished. More than one so-called 'Portrait of Lady Hamilton,' in the private collections of England, owes its present title entirely to the imagination of the owner, or to the dealer who sold it to him. The whole subject is confusing, and it is often very difficult to trace the true history of many of these canvases. John Romney, who would not attempt the task, gives a list of twenty-three of them, finished and unfinished, and Hayley mentions several others. Some of these will be spoken of in more detail later on.

In addition to 'Nature' and 'Circe,' one of the best representations he painted of her was as 'A Bacchante,' of which there are several versions. The original picture was dispatched to Sir William Hamilton in Naples early in 1785. In one of his letters Charles Greville tells his uncle:—'Emma is very grateful for your remembrance. Her picture shall be sent by the first ship—I wish Romney yet to mend the dog.' This picture, with others, and some of Sir William's choicest vases, was sent back to England during the Neapolitan disturbances, and lost in the wreck of the *Colossus*. Charles Greville possessed a replica, probably the one now belonging to Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne, and there is a copy at Petworth, while a third remained in the possession of the artist's family until Miss Romney's sale in 1894. It was, says Romney's son, 'the most enchanting of all her portraits' (see Plate IX.). Other well-known canvases are the three-quarter length of her in a straw hat, usually

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known as 'Emma,' which was painted for Mr. Crawford; the whole-length 'Cassandra,' painted for Boydell's 'Shakespeare Gallery'; the 'St. Cecilia'; the 'Spinstress'; another 'Bacchante,' a head only, purchased by Sir John Leicester for twenty-five guineas, who gave it its title; the 'Sensibility'; 'Alope Exposed with her Child,' for which Admiral Vernon gave sixty guineas; unfinished whole-lengths of 'Iphigenia' and 'Joan of Arc'; a half-length of 'The Pythian Priestess'; and a 'Calypso' and a 'Magdalen,' painted for George, Prince of Wales, who gave two hundred pounds for them. Some of these were painted in 1791, at the time when Emma Hart came back to England to be made Lady Hamilton.

The 'Sensibility' was begun in the autumn of 1786, merely as a head of Lady Hamilton on a small canvas. When Hayley saw it—in November, according to his *Life of Romney*, but in the following May, according to his own *Memoirs*—he was greatly delighted with it, and exclaimed:—'This is a most happy beginning; you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression; you have only to enlarge your canvas, introduce the shrub mimosa, growing in a vase, with a hand approaching its leaves, and you may call your picture a personification of Sensibility.' 'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter, 'and will enlarge my canvas immediately.' 'Do so (I answered with exultation, on his kindly adopting my idea) and without loss of time I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman at Hammersmith, and bring you the most beautiful plant I can find, that may suit your purpose.' This was done, and the picture was turned into the well-known full-length kneeling figure. Thus altered it illustrated an incident in Hayley's poem, *The Triumphs of Temper*, and this no doubt was the chief reason for his suggestion. The poet was most anxious to possess it, and as one of his neighbours was in treaty with him for the purchase of a small farm, he sold the land on the understanding that the picture was to be purchased from Romney and added to the price. Hayley thus got the picture for nothing, and shortly afterwards lent it to Boydell to be engraved, thus terminating an 'unpleasant altercation' between the publisher and the painter over a print. Romney returned the painting to him on October 27th, 1789, after it had been engraved, and sent with it as a gift 'two attendant figures in *chiaro oscuro*,' representing 'Sorrow' and 'Joy.' In the accompanying letter the artist explained that they were to be accepted as an expression of his remorse for unintentionally wounding his friend's feelings, who, however, had not the slightest recollection

of any cause for such displeasure. The picture is now at Rangemore, the late Lord Burton's seat. It was engraved in stipple by Richard Earlom, and published in March 1789, and the head only, in a circle, also in stipple, by Caroline Watson, for Hayley's *Life of Romney*.

The full-length seated figure of 'St. Cecilia,' with musical attributes, which was engraved in stipple by George Keating in 1789, was purchased by Mr. Montagu Burgoyne, and is the only one to which this title can be properly applied. It now belongs to Lord Masham. There are two other versions of this picture, generally known by the same title, though a better description of them would be 'Lady Hamilton praying,' one in possession of Lord Iveagh, while the other was in the collection of the late Mr. Alfred Beit. The former[1] was lent to the Birmingham Art Gallery in 1903, and the latter[2] is apparently a carefully finished first study for it. In both of them the lady is shown only to the waist, with eyes uplifted, and hands clasped in prayer, and a heavy white veil draped over the hair, while the musical attributes are wanting. Mr. Beit's version, which was recently engraved in mezzotint by Mr. Norman Hirst, is said to have been purchased in Naples soon after the revolution there, and to have been looted from the English Embassy during the riots, when the King and Queen, and Sir William and Lady Hamilton, were obliged to take refuge on Nelson's ship. It was probably one or other of these versions of 'St. Cecilia' which was purchased by Lord Nelson when Sir William Hamilton, to the Admiral's great rage, sold several portraits of Emma at Christie's with his other pictures, including the one by Madame Vigée Le Brun. This picture he hung up in his cabin. 'Yesterday I joined Admiral Totty,' he writes to his enchantress, 'where I found little Parker[3] with all my treasures, your dear, kind, friendly letters, your picture as Santa Emma, for a Santa you are, if ever there was one in this world.'

The beautiful 'Lady Hamilton at the Spinning Wheel,' or 'The Spinstress,' which was sold at Messrs. Christie's on July 3rd, 1875, for 770 guineas, and acquired by the Earl of Normanton, was painted for Charles Greville, but was still unpaid for two years after the lady had departed for Naples. Greville was in pecuniary difficulties, and as Mr. John Christian Curwen wanted it, he agreed to relinquish it to

[1] Reproduced in Sir Herbert Maxwell's book.

[2] Reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book.

[3] Possibly Sir Hyde Parker, Captain of the *Phœnix*, of whom Romney painted a full-length portrait, which was well engraved by James Walker in 1780.

him. 'The separation from the original of the Spinstress,' he wrote to Romney, 'has not been indifferent to me, and I am but just reconciled to it, from knowing that the beneficial consequences of acquirements will be obtained, and that the aberration from the plan I intended will be for her benefit. I therefore can have no reason to value the Spinstress less than I have done, on the contrary the just estimation of its merits is ascertained by the offer from a person who does not know the original; yet I find myself daily so much poorer, that I do not foresee when I can pay for it, and I am already too much obliged to you to avail myself in any degree of your kindness to me; perhaps Mr. Christian might accept my resignation of it and pay for it, and give me the option of repurchasing if the improbable event of my increase of means shall enable me to recover what I now lose with regret; but I can make no condition, and I leave the full and entire disposal of it to you.'

John Christian, who took the additional surname of Curwen on his marriage, was at this time one of Romney's best patrons. He had 'taste to appreciate his merit and liberality to encourage and reward it.' In addition to 'The Spinstress,' for which he gave 150 guineas, he also purchased two of the versions of 'Serena' and one of the several examples of Lady Hamilton as a 'Bacchante Dancing.' Both he and his wife sat to Romney at about this time for the two full-length portraits still at Workington Hall, the lady's home. She is represented standing in a landscape beneath a tree, turned to the spectator's right, her right elbow resting on a pedestal, and the right knee slightly bent. The dress is white, with a blue sash, and a red cloak, held by both hands, is flung over one arm. It is one of Romney's classical and 'sculpturesque' compositions. In the background the family mansion is seen across a sheet of water. The husband is shown standing by the side of a horse, in a dark coat, buff breeches, and a striped waistcoat. He holds his hat in his right hand, and his left arm rests on the back of his steed, which is not a very happy example of Romney's skill in painting animals, and is in striking contrast to the excellence of the rendering of the man himself. These two portraits were lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1890, by Mr. H. F. Curwen.

Romney's own favourite among all the many studies he made of Lady Hamilton was the 'Spinstress.' Mr. Walter Sichel, in his recently published book on her, misled by a letter which he quotes from Messrs. Humphry Ward and Roberts' *Romney*, says that Romney's

choice among them was the 'Sempstress,' which is really a portrait of Miss Lucy Vernon. Mr. Sichel's quotation runs:—'"The sight," wrote Romney to her in 1786, soon after her first appearance in Naples, "of such a head as the Cassandra," which he was copying for Hayley, always "inspires" him; but as for his subsequent sitters, "ladies of fashion," since her departure, "all fall far short of the 'Sempstress'; indeed, it is the sun of my Hemispheer and they are the twinkling stars."' This letter was found by Mr. C. Fairfax Murray in one of Romney's sketch-books purchased by him at Miss Romney's sale in 1894. He has been good enough to examine the original again carefully, and the word is undoubtedly 'Spinstress,' a mistake having been made in transcribing it in the first instance. The only reason for calling attention to this error here is that if it is not corrected it may come to be regarded as affording absolute proof that Lady Hamilton was the model for the 'Sempstress.' That she sat for this beautiful picture of Miss Vernon has been asserted almost as often as it has been alleged that Honora Sneyd was the model for Serena, but neither of these statements is a true one.

'The Sempstress,' which John Romney dates about 1785, was bought by Admiral Vernon. It was engraved by Thomas Cheesman in 1787, and lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1880, as 'Miss Lucy Vernon as a Seamstress,' by Mr. F. W. P. Vernon-Wentworth, together with 'Lady Hamilton as a Wood Nymph.'

XIII

IT was at this period of his life that Romney achieved many of his greatest successes. It is in no way true, as stated by more than one writer, that while he was under the spell of Lady Hamilton's beauty, he reduced the number of his sitters in order to be able to devote more time to depicting her loveliness. On the contrary, the inspiration caused by her presence in his studio seems to have found an echo in the many beautiful portraits he painted about this time.

In a pocket-book belonging to Mr. Lawrence Romney, which, from a pencilled memorandum within, appears to have been used by the artist in 1782, there are one or two rough lists of names, not very easy to decipher, which evidently refer to sitters. Among them are Mr. Wallace, Mr. Neville, Mrs. Ward, Lord Carlisle, Mr. (or Mrs.) J. Braddyll, Mr. Beckford, the Bishop of Chester, Mr. Montague Frederick, Mrs. Montagu Burgoyne, Lady Vere, Mrs. Gale, Mr. (or Mrs.) Rooke, Mr. Freeman, Col. North, Sir N. Thomas, Miss Taubman, Mrs. Knatchbull, Mrs. Maxwell, Mrs. Grove, and Mrs. Newbery, and such notes as 'write to the Duchess of Marlborough,' 'Walker's Picter'; 'Finish Miss Clavering Pict,' and 'Mr. Wale (?) a bill of Lady Shelburne's Picter.' Other notes include lists of things to be taken with him to Eartham, and memoranda of various kinds. The book is filled with pencil sketches, many of them hasty indications of poses and attitudes for portraits, one of which, of a young lady seated, with her head resting on her arm, is labelled 'Miss Long.' Other rough drawings are of figures for some of his classical subjects.

The Mrs. Montagu Burgoyne, who was among his sitters in 1782, was Elizabeth, daughter of Eliab Harvey of Claybury Hall, Essex, and wife of Montagu, the second son of Sir Roger Burgoyne, Bart. The portrait is a half-length, in which she is dressed in white, with a blue sash, and is leaning her head on her right hand. It was lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1882 by Madame de Quaire.

In the autumn of this year he met Miss Anna Seward, the poetess,

at Eartham, and painted her portrait for his host, who gave it a place of honour on his walls between busts of Newton and Pope. He had intended that the busts should be of Pope and Prior, but the sculptor made a mistake, which Hayley explained to Miss Seward in some humorous verses. The lady regarded this as 'intoxicating flattery.' 'How charming is your poetical gallantry!' she writes. 'If all the testimonies of it, bestowed upon my flattered self, were collected and given to the world, the garlands of Swift's Stella, and Prior's Chloe would fade before mine. My pride, my heart exults in these distinctions, conferred by the transcendent English bard of the present aera.' Hayley had made the personal acquaintance of the lady in the previous year, during a short visit to the poetess and her father in the Episcopal Close, Lichfield. 'As to the person of this female genius,' he wrote to his Eliza, 'I cannot give you a better idea of it, than by saying she is a handsome likeness of those full-length pictures which you have seen of your namesake, Queen Elizabeth, where the painters gave her Majesty all the beauty they could, consistent with the character of her face. The Muse laughs at herself as fat and lame; yet the connoisseurs in woman would still pronounce her handsome.'

Miss Seward was rather proud of her supposed likeness to Mrs. Fitzherbert. In one of her letters to her faithful Saville, written from Buxton in 1796, she tells him:—'That resemblance to Mrs. Fitzherbert, with which I have been so variously, so repeatedly flattered, was observed by the polite, obliging, and agreeable Lady Harewood last night, who has taken me to each assembly since I had first the honour of her notice.'

When she returned the visit in 1782, both her host and Romney did their best to entertain her, the one with his pen, the other with his pencil, and mutual admiration reigned supreme. Her reception was vastly congenial to her 'sprightly and cultivated mind. Many occasional *jeux d'esprit*,' we are told, 'arose in the course of this interesting visit.'

Romney began a second portrait of her at Eartham, which he took up again in 1786, the fine three-quarter length, in which she is seated with her head resting on her hand, now in the possession of Mr. T. L. Burrowes (see Plate x.). It was not finished until the summer of 1788, when, urged by Hayley, he completed it, and sent it as a present to Miss Seward's father. It was received with the greatest delight in Lichfield, and produced verses and grateful letters in return.[1]

[1] See page 151.

Romney greatly admired the lady, says Hayley, 'for her poetical talents, for the sprightly charms of her social character, and for the graces of a majestic person. He was much affected by her filial tenderness, when she spoke of her aged father, and in his zeal to gratify the good old man with a resemblance of his accomplished daughter, he began, in Sussex, a successful portrait of this admirable lady, which he completed in London. Romney had one characteristic as an artist, for which it is hardly possible to honor his memory too much: He never seemed so happy, as when his pencil was employed in the service of the benevolent affections. His fervent spirit was more eager to oblige a friend, or to gratify a parent, than to exert itself in the pursuit of affluence, or fame.'

The Swan of Lichfield's opinion of the Bard of Eartham was no less flattering. 'Hayley is indeed a true poet,' she wrote to George Hardinge in 1786. 'He has the fire and the invention of Dryden, without any of his absurdity; and he has the wit and ease of Prior. If his versification is a degree less polished than Pope's, it is more various. We find the numbers sweet and flowing, and, I think, sufficiently abundant in the graces of harmony.' A year or two later she exclaims to Court Dewes:—'Surely Mr. Hayley's verse breathes a more creative and original genius, than even the brilliant Pope, who excels him in nothing but in the high and laboured polish of his enchanting numbers; while Mr. H.'s prose has the ease and wit of Addison, with much more strength and spirit.' And again, in writing to young Cary, the future translator of Dante:—'You say the Triumphs of Temper ensure immortality to Mr. Hayley's fame; but surely if that exquisite sportive production of a rich and luxuriant imagination had never been written, his beautiful Epistles on Painting, and, far above even them, his Essays on Epic Poetry, together with that fine Ode to Howard, will be considered as amongst the first Delphic ornaments of the eighteenth century.'

During this same visit to Eartham in 1782 Romney began to paint his own portrait, at Hayley's own request, who had no hesitation in asking for such a present. Romney took the canvas back with him to London in order to complete it; but, says John Romney, Hayley 'did not allow him to finish it, but hurried it off to Eartham without delay. The head, however, is perfect, but the rest of the figure, which could not be completed without a model, remains in *statu quo*; but Mr. Hayley preferred the bird in hand.' 'It is an uncommonly fine head,' he goes on, 'extremely like, and full of character; any physio-

gnomist who saw it, would say: "that is the head of a man of genius"; and if he was a connoisseur, would add: "and he that painted it, must also have been one of the highest class."' The painter was forty-eight at the time. At this point of his narrative the son, no doubt in emulation of Hayley, bursts forth into song, with a sonnet of small poetic pretensions, in its honour. This portrait, which is one of the finest studies of character Romney ever accomplished, is now in the National Portrait Gallery. (See Plate XI.)

In their valuable *Catalogue Raisonné* Messrs. Humphry Ward and Roberts, misled by a paragraph in Hayley's *Life* (p. 86), attribute it to the year 1780, when the painter was forty-six. Hayley says: 'He gratified me particularly, in that year,[1] by shewing the versatility of his talents; for he finished an admirable drawing in water-colours of his friends at Eartham, and also a strong resemblance of himself, which the reader will see engraved in the trio of his own portraits, and marked with the year of his age, forty-six.' Turning to the frontispiece, where these three portraits are badly engraved, it will be found that the engraver has omitted to place the several dates and ages beneath them, in spite of Hayley's statement to the contrary in the text; but it is, nevertheless, easy to identify the 1780 portrait among them. At the bottom of the plate is inscribed: 'Three portraits of Romney by himself at different periods of his life, in oil, in water-colours, and in crayons, all painted at Eartham.' The one in oil is the National Portrait Gallery picture, and the one in which he is shown in spectacles is the crayon study he made in March, 1799, while the remaining one, a small oval, in which he is wearing a cocked hat, is undoubtedly the water-colour drawing made in 1780. Hayley, in the words quoted above, although he does not express himself very clearly, certainly refers, not to an oil painting, but to a second water-colour drawing, the first one being the small group of Hayley, Mrs. Hayley, and Lieut. Howell, which was No. 135 in the Romney Exhibition (Summer, 1900), lent by Mr. Ernest Leggatt.

Additional proof of this is found later on in Hayley's book (p. 96), where he says that in 'the autumn of 1784 . . . he began at my request, on that occasion, the striking resemblance of himself in oil, which may be regarded as the best of his own portraits, and which is marked in the frontispiece to this volume with the year of his age, forty-nine. It well expresses that pensive vivacity, and profusion of ideas, which a spectator might discover in his countenance, whenever

[1] 1780. See page 98.

he sat absorbed in studious meditation.' As to this date, however, the painter's two biographers do not agree.

John Romney, who is usually more accurate than Hayley, states very distinctly (p. 192) that the portrait, of which the engraving by Thomas Wright forms the frontispiece of his *Memoirs*, was painted in the autumn of 1782, when the artist was forty-eight; and there is every probability that his statement is the correct one, and that the picture was painted in 1782, and not in 1780 or 1784. Hayley, in his own *Memoirs*, does not mention it.

Other portraits of 1782 were half-lengths of Captain Peere Williams, R.N., and Lady Augusta Murray, the latter for his good patroness the Countess Gower, as well as the delightfully delicate and refined 'Duchess-Countess of Sutherland,' recently removed from Trentham to Stafford House. Lady Gower also bought one of the several versions of his ideal portrait of 'Serena,' the heroine of *The Triumphs of Temper*. The 'Serena' pictures are almost always spoken of as portraits of Honora Sneyd (Mrs. Richard Lovell Edgeworth), but they certainly do not represent that lady, whom Romney never saw. The reiterated statements of Miss Seward in her *Letters*[1] must be taken as absolute proof of this, for Honora was a member of the Seward household in Lichfield for fourteen years, and the poetess never ceased to regret her early death. 'Serena' merely embodied Romney's ideal of girlish innocence and beauty, and her striking likeness to Miss Sneyd was merely accidental.

There are eight or nine 'Serena' pictures in existence, as well as several slighter studies. Among them are two for which Lady Hamilton sat as the model, the 'Sensibility' picture in the Burton collection, and the unfinished canvas in Mr. Pierpont Morgan's possession usually known as 'Lady Hamilton reading a Gazette,' though the former of these was only turned into a 'Serena' on Hayley's suggestion.[2] The others were all painted from an unknown model, probably the young lady already mentioned (see page 99), who was visiting at Eartham in 1780 when Hayley was at work on his poem. Mrs. Gamlin says that the Thurlow version of the reading Serena was painted from Lady Margaret Beauclerk, and that 'there can be no doubt but that she was the original of both the full and profile reading Serenas,' but she gives no authority for this statement.

Five of these canvases represent Serena reading *Evelina* by

[1] See Appendix II. for proofs.

[2] See page 115.

candle-light, and illustrate the following lines from the first canto of *The Triumphs of Temper*:—

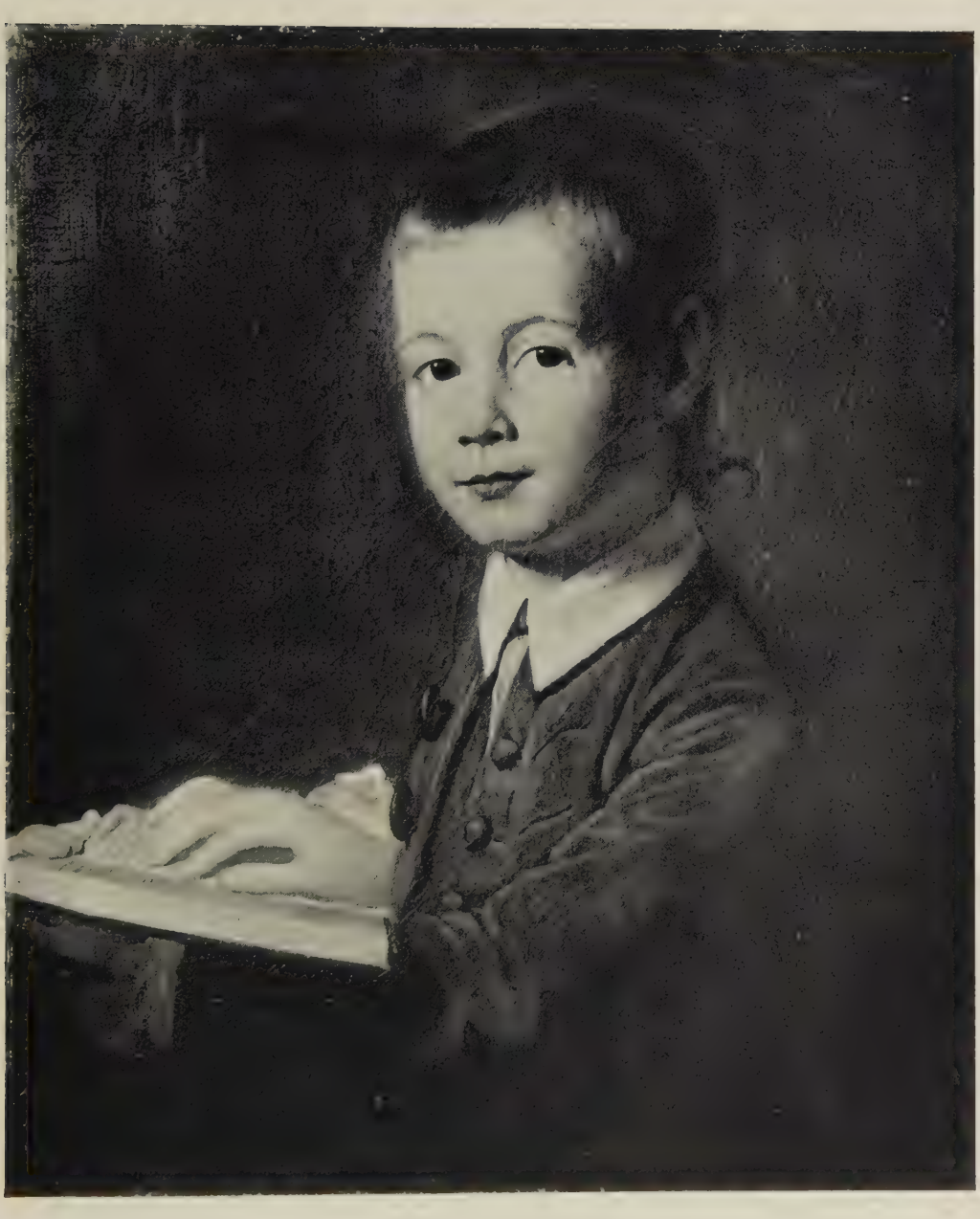
> 'Nor held it sin to cast a private glance
> O'er the dear pages of a new romance,
> Eager in fiction's touching scenes to find
> A field, to exercise her youthful mind;
> The touching scenes new energy imprest
> On all the virtues of her feeling breast.
> Sweet Evelina's fascinating power
> Had first beguil'd of sleep her midnight hour:
> Possest by sympathy's enchanting sway,
> She read, unconscious of the dawning day.'

One of these versions was purchased from Romney by Lord Thurlow, another by Mr. Christian Curwen, and a third by Lady Gower. The two former were exhibited at the second of the two Romney Exhibitions held in the Grafton Gallery in the summer and winter of 1900-1901, together with a third example lent by Mr. A. Smith, and 'Serena in the Boat of Apathy,' which was also purchased from the artist by Mr. Curwen.

The most beautiful of all, No. 24 in the catalogue, was lent by Major Thurlow, a descendant of the original owner, and is reproduced in this book. (See *Frontispiece.*) Romney never painted anything sweeter or more tender than this, the only one of the series in which she is shown full face, seated upon a sofa, her head bent over the book. This picture was exhibited at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857, and at the British Institution in 1863. It was engraved in stipple by John Jones, and published March 1st, 1790, and again in stipple by Hopwood in 1811.

The other reading 'Serenas' are all shown in profile, with the face turned to the left. No. 25 (Grafton Gallery) was lent by Mr. Alan de L. Curwen, a descendant of the original purchaser. It represents Hayley's heroine seated in her bedchamber reading by candle-light (as described in Miss Seward's letter),[1] so absorbed in her book that she is unconscious of the dawning light already stealing through her open window. This canvas is still in perfect condition. It was engraved in mezzotint by John Raphael Smith, and published September 28th, 1782. The engraver added the head-line 'Evelina' to the book she holds, and the four last lines from the extract quoted above are

[1] See Appendix II.



MASTER COLLINGWOOD

IN THE COLLECTION OF COLONEL W. HALL WALKER

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MRS. WILBRAHAM BOOTLE WITH A DOG

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE EARL OF LATHOM

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engraved beneath the plate.[1] In the stipple by Jones, already mentioned, no title is placed on the book, but the name 'Serena' and the four lines of verse are given in the second state of the engraving. The Curwen example was exhibited at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1890, by Mr. H. F. Curwen, as 'A Lady Reading' (No. 160).

A slightly smaller replica of it was lent to the Grafton Gallery by Mr. A. Smith (No. 6), which, although it has suffered a little from cleaning at some earlier date, is undoubtedly from Romney's hand, and displays beauty of colour and real grace in the designing of the draperies.

In addition to these there was a 'Head of Serena (front view),' No. 42, lent by Mr. G. H. Shepherd; and in the earlier of the two Romney exhibitions a 'Portrait of Honora Sneyd as Serena' (No. 116), lent by Mr. O. B. Martyn.

At a miscellaneous sale at Christie's on May 23rd, 1903, among several pictures from the collection of Mr. E. W. Beckett, M.P., there was a 'Portrait of Miss Sneyd' (No. 81), in white dress and mob-cap with blue ribbon, seated at a table reading (59 in. × 48 in.), which was purchased by Mr. A. Smith for 650 guineas. This seems to correspond with the picture lent by Mr. Smith to the second Romney exhibition.

A third version of the 'profile' picture is the one purchased from the painter by Lady Gower, and still in the possession of the Duke of Sutherland, which is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's *Romney* (page 78); while a fourth and considerably smaller example is in the Dyce Collection at the South Kensington Museum, and is reproduced in 'George Paston's' *Life* of the artist (page 65). Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower describes the Trentham version as being 'pearly and as fresh in colouring as the morning light that is invading the unconscious nymph's studies.'

The fourth of the 'Serena' pictures shown at the Grafton Gallery was No. 41, 'Serena in the Boat of Apathy,' which also has remained in the possession of the Curwen family since the day it was painted. This represents Serena when she visits, in her dreams, in company with the fairy sprite Sophrosyne,

> 'The realms, where Spleen's infernal agents goad
> The ghostly tenants of her drear abode,'

[1] In the earliest state of the plate it is merely scratched 'Serena, vide Hayley's triumphs of Temper.'

and embarks, in great fear, in the boat guided by the grisly figure of Apathy, which is to carry her over the gulf of Indolence. Romney has represented her reclining at full length, in profile, with her hands clasped under her chin, in illustration of the lines :

> 'th' obedient maid
> Her form along the narrow vessel laid :
> But oh ! what terrors shake her tender soul,
> As from the shore the bark begins to roll,
> And, sever'd from her friend, her eyes discern
> The steering spectre wading at the stern !'

This picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1890, under the erroneous title of 'Miranda in a Boat propelled by Caliban' (No. 43). An unfinished version of it (49 in. × 60½ in.), almost of the exact size of the original, appeared in a sale of various properties at Messrs. Christie's, on July 8th, 1905, as 'A Maiden in the Boat of Charon,' and was purchased by Mr. Permain. The background, with the figure of Apathy who guides the boat, had been only hastily indicated, and since its purchase a part of it has been cut away, and the effect of the picture improved. It has been re-christened 'Serena in Contemplation.'

A smaller version of the subject, in which only the upper part of Serena's figure is shown, is reproduced in Mr. Walter Sichel's *Lady Hamilton.*[1] He sees in it a portrait of the fair Emma, although the likeness is not very striking. In this attribution he seems to have been misled by a letter from Hayley to Lady Hamilton, which he quotes from Pettigrew, vol. ii., and prints in the following note (p. 18) :—

'Hayley, writing to her in 1804, and signing himself "The Hermit," says that in his "little marine cell" he could "entertain" her "with a sight of yourself in three enchanting personages, 'Cassandra,' 'Serena,' and 'Sensibility.' These three ladies are all *worth seeing*, whether the old hermit is so or not; so pray, come to see us whenever you can. Adieu."'

It will be seen that out of the three pictures of Emma which Hayley then possessed, two or them represented her as the heroine of his most popular poem; but the one he calls 'Serena' was not a version of the 'Boat of Apathy,' but undoubtedly the splendid unfinished study now belonging to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, commonly and quite erroneously called 'Lady Hamilton reading a Gazette recording

[1] One of the versions of this picture is reproduced in colours in *The Connoisseur* for February 1909.

one of Nelson's victories,'—in all ways a ridiculous and quite impossible title. This unfinished picture was given to Hayley by Romney in 1798, when the poet was paying a visit to the painter in his new house. On December 1st of that year Hayley wrote to his son Tom, then ill at home at Eartham, 'Did I tell you he has kindly given me his unfinished sketch of "Serena reading the newspaper."' It was bought in at Hayley's sale in 1821, with other Romney pictures, by his cousin and heir, Captain Godfrey, and was sold by the latter's grandson at Christie's, May 12th, 1888, with three others, among them the 'Cassandra,' when it was purchased by Messrs. Agnew for £1312, 10s., and passed into Mr. Morgan's collection. It was included in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1877, and again in 1895, and at the Grafton Gallery and elsewhere, and always, as at the sale in 1888, under the incorrect title quoted above.

This study undoubtedly represents the scene in the fourth canto of the *Triumphs of Temper*, in which Serena, descending early before the morning meal is ready, idly takes up the newspaper, and finds therein a scandalous paragraph about herself:

> 'So did Serena start, so wildly gaze,
> In such mixt pangs of anguish and amaze,
> Feeling the wound which Scandal had design'd
> To lacerate her mild and modest mind.
> Startled, as one who from electric wire
> Unheeding catches unsuspected fire,
> She reads, then almost doubts that she has read,
> And thinks some vision hovers round her head.
> Now, her fixt eye some striking words confine,
> And now she darts it thrice thro' every line;
> Nor could amazement more her senses shake,
> Had every letter been a gorgon's snake.
> Now rising indignation takes its turn,
> And her flush'd cheeks with tingling blushes burn,
> With restless motion and with many a frown,
> Thro' the wide room she paces up and down.'

In this splendid study the look of dawning horror and disgust in her widely-opened eyes under lifted brows is wonderfully expressed. She is wearing, too, the high white mob-cap in which she is represented in all the other 'Serena' pictures. Further evidence in favour of this ascription may be found in the sixth edition of Hayley's poem, published by T. Cadell in 1788, with seven illustrations by Stothard,

engraved by Sharp, Heath, and Neagle. Several of these illustrations, if not all, are taken by Stothard from Romney's designs without any acknowledgment. The 'Serena Reading' is, with the exception that she is shown with her arms resting on a table, practically identical with the profile 'Serena,' and the figure in the 'Boat of Apathy' is the same as in Mr. Curwen's picture. In the one in which the lady is represented reading the newspaper the pose resembles that in Mr. Morgan's study, although the figure is shown at full length, and the expression is smiling, as it illustrates the story a moment later, when the heroine is appeased by finding in the same paper a sonnet in her honour from the pen of some unknown admirer.[1] Another illustration represents the incident of the Sensitive Plant, and although this has no resemblance to Lord Burton's picture, the nymphs dancing in a ring in the background recall not only the dancing Gower children but more than one study in Romney's sketch-books; and again, in the one in which the powers of Mischief are shown round the cauldron from which rises the phantom Spleen, there is a close resemblance to more than one of Romney's sketches and studies at Cambridge and elsewhere. With regard to the two remaining engravings the writer has been unable to trace any original source from which they have been adapted.

They represent 'Sir Gilbert and Serena,' in which the father, tortured by gout, refuses to allow her to go to the ball, and 'Falkland and Serena at the Ball,' and as two pictures with these titles were exhibited at the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1787, by S. Harding, of London, the illustrations were probably taken from them.

The twelfth edition, published in 1803, 12mo., had six plates from 'new, original designs by Maria Flaxman,' engraved by William Blake, but here again the source of the inspiration was Romney. Blake, writing to Thomas Butts on 10th January, 1802, says, 'I am now engaged in engraving six small plates for a new edition of Mr. Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper*, from drawings by Maria Flaxman, sister to my friend the sculptor.'

The remaining 'Serena' picture, the late Lord Burton's 'Lady Hamilton as Sensibility,' is described elsewhere; its connection with the poem was only an afterthought, whereas the others were directly inspired by Hayley's verses. It represents Serena's vision of the queen Sensibility in her flowery kingdom:—

[1] Since completing this chapter the writer finds that Mrs. Gamlin (pp. 143-145) has already given the right title to this picture.

'The bending snow-drop, and the briar-rose,
The simple circle of her crown compose;
Roses of every hue her robe adorn,
. . . . . .
Her fair left arm around a vase she flings,
From which the tender plant mimosa springs:
Towards its leaves, o'er which she fondly bends,
The youthful fair her vacant hand extends
With gentle motion, anxious to survey
How far the feeling fibres own her sway:
The leaves, as conscious of their queen's command,
Successive fall at her approaching hand;
While her soft breast with pity seems to pant,
And shrinks at every shrinking of the plant.'

In 1783, Hayley stayed with Romney in Cavendish Square for the greater part of January. 'I had the pleasure of finding the *caro pittore* in high health and spirits,' he wrote to Eartham. 'I am most comfortably quartered, as I feel my host is really happy in his visitor.' He had taken with him two newly finished plays, but on his attempting to read them at a dinner party which included Long, Arnold, and Meyer, no one would listen to them, but all went off instead to see Mrs. Siddons in *Jane Shore*. They were obliged, however, to hear the comedy on the following night, and on another evening, Henderson, the actor, read the tragedy, *The Two Connoisseurs*, for the happy author. The two friends seem to have had rather a gay time, and Romney had to abandon his evening work. Other visitors were Carwardine, Stephenson, Steevens, the Shakespearean scholar, and Berridge, who brought from Derby a picture of Virgil's Tomb, as a present to Hayley from Wright, the artist.

Edward Gibbon, another of Hayley's literary friends, had just returned to town, and was induced to sit to Romney. They dined with one another on more than one occasion. 'We are this instant returned from the Roman Eagle,' Hayley wrote his wife, 'who has proved his generous and imperial spirit, by the reception he gave us. Romney has seized him most happily on canvass, and I have been doubly delighted by the success of the *Caro Pittore*, and the applause which the great historian has bestowed on my *Two Connoisseurs*, which I recited to him in the course of the evening.'

Steevens, however, who breakfasted with them a day or two later, was not so pleased with the picture. 'You would have thought that all the brilliancy of his *genius* could not atone for the malignant

sarcasms which he levelled at the new portrait of Gibbon, when he heard it was designed for me.'

Gibbon was far from attractive in appearance. In youth, according to Lord Sheffield, he was 'a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and arguing, with the greatest ability; Mr. Gibbon became very fat and corpulent, but he had uncommonly small bones, and was very slightly made'; while Colman said of him, 'his mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage.' Romney has toned down these characteristics to some extent in his portrait, but the stout figure, fat double chin, and round chubby cheeks are all in evidence. It is a three-quarters length, seated to the left, the head turned slightly towards the spectator. He wears a white wig, a rose-coloured velvet coat with a deep brown fur collar, grey breeches and stockings, and white cravat and ruffles. His left hand rests on his thigh, and his right is stretched over the table in front of him, the index finger pointing towards three books inscribed *Roman History.*

It is a fine and striking portrait, displaying real insight into character, and a proof, if such be wanted, that Romney could paint something more than mere handsome youths. There is nothing raw in the colouring, which is good and subdued, in general tone of a rich golden brown, nor is it flimsy or meaningless in its brushwork. It was lent by Lord Beauchamp to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1894, and was No. 30 in the exhibition held at Oxford in 1906. According to the Oxford catalogue it was begun in January 1783, though Hayley did not receive it until 1787. It was bought in at the poet's sale in 1821 by Captain Godfrey, from whom it passed to William, second Earl Beauchamp.

Sir Joshua's portrait of the historian was exhibited by its side in the last named exhibition, a half-length, belonging to Lord Sheffield, in which he is represented in almost the same position, but with the eyes turned to the left, instead of towards the spectator, and wearing a scarlet coat, also trimmed with fur, a very fine and rich piece of colouring. As a study of character it goes deeper than the Romney, and in spite of the fact that the fat, bulging cheeks are more strongly emphasised, while the little round button of a mouth is very prominent, there is more of the nobility and less of the grotesqueness which mingled in Gibbon's face.

In this portrait, in Hayley's opinion, the painter was singularly happy, though he failed in the subordinate parts of it; 'the coun-

tenance is exquisitely painted; delicately exact in resemblance and truth of character.' The poet preferred it to the one by Sir Joshua, because 'it approaches still nearer to life and exhibits more faithfully the social spirit of Gibbon,' but adds that, with the exception of the face, the portrait was hastily painted. 'To some pictures of Romney, such censure, I must confess, may be very justly applied; but his failings chiefly arose from his having too much to do, and not from a want of ability to do better. In many of his largest portraits and conversation pieces, when he could find the time to study the scenery, and meditate on all that he wished to perform, his performance proved him a master.'

Hayley was back again at Romney's for a flying visit in August, mainly for the purpose of helping in the election of their common friend, William Long, who was a candidate for the post of surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The weather was intensely hot, and one afternoon and evening were spent with Romney and Flaxman in Westminster Abbey. On another, they were 'all in deep consultation on monuments, chimney-pieces, etc.,' probably for Hayley's new library.

Another welcome visitor was his brother, Captain Romney, who came home from India on leave, and remained in England during the winter of 1783-84, spending much of his time in Cavendish Square.

Among the pictures he painted in 1783 were the two little Thurlow girls, standing at a spinnet; Lady Brownlow and Master Cust, one of the few pictures he has dated, which was exhibited for the first time in the Birmingham Art Gallery in 1903, together with the portrait of Sir Brownlow Cust, both lent by Lord Brownlow; Lady Georgiana Smith and her child; the two daughters of Sir Charles Kent; the Earl of Derby, a whole length, with a horse; and kitcats of Lord Chatham and Pitt, the first, if not both, for the Rev. Mr. Wilson, Lord Chatham's tutor. The 'Pitt' remained for many years in his studio, with the head only finished. 'It was the finest head ever painted of Pitt, both for strength of character, and individual similitude. It was nearly a front face, which rendered it more difficult to catch the likeness.'[1] Romney received 50 guineas for it, 'but from whom I do not know,' says his son. An indifferent mezzotint by John Jones was done from this head in 1789, in which Pitt was represented at half length in his robes as Chancellor of Exchequer. The picture itself is now in the possession of the Marquess Camden.

Hayley was again staying at Cavendish Square in May 1784, when

[1] *John Romney*, page 194.

his play of *Lord Russel* was produced in London with some success; and the artist paid his usual annual visit to Eartham in the following autumn. Flaxman was also there, for the purpose of fitting up the new library, which had been built in 1780, 'a room of thirty feet by twenty-four, filled with books and decorated with the sculpture of Flaxman, and the painting of Romney!' The sculptor not only superintended this work, but also modelled busts of his host and fellow visitor. The former was a commission given to him by Romney, and the irrepressible poet penned a sonnet upon the latter. Flaxman, after his return to London, wrote to Hayley—'I had the happiness of living such a fortnight at Eartham, as many thousands of my fellow-creatures go out of the world without enjoying.'

Either Hayley is incorrect as to the year in which his own bust was modelled, or Flaxman made a second one ten years later, for Romney's well-known picture of the sculptor at work on the bust of Hayley, which includes portraits of his host and his son Tom, who became Flaxman's pupil, was painted in 1795-96, after Flaxman's return from Rome.

The friendship between the young sculptor and the older painter was a deep and sincere one. Flaxman looked up to Romney with real gratitude as one who had encouraged and helped him in his ambition to become a sculptor, in the days when such encouragement was of real value.

Flaxman was born in York in 1755, and six months later his father moved to London and opened a shop in New Street, Covent Garden, for the selling of plaster casts and figures, where Romney, when he came to make purchases, used to find the frail little boy, who could only walk on crutches, seated among his father's wares, drawing and modelling and reading Homer. At fifteen Flaxman entered the Royal Academy Schools, and shortly afterwards was working as a designer for Wedgwood. He married Miss Ann Denham in 1782, and went to Rome in 1787.

The presence of Flaxman at Eartham induced Romney to try his hand with the modelling tools, and he produced a small recumbent figure representing 'Afflicted Friendship,' to be placed on a sepulchral vase in a grotto in the garden, in memory of Hayley's friend, Thornton. 'The figure was elegant,' says the poet, 'and its expression powerfully pathetic.' Romney took it with him to London to have it fired, but it shared the fate of so many of his efforts, and after being put on one side, crumbled to pieces.

It was during this visit to Eartham, too, that he began a picture of a little girl of seven, in a landscape, kneeling by the side of a dead fawn, which had been struck by lightning.[1] 'The head of the girl is much in the manner of Corregio, and her sorrow most exquisitely expressed; but the head is all that was ever completed,' is Hayley's criticism of it. Romney abandoned it because he could not obtain the necessary model from which to paint the animal.

It was about this time, if we may judge from the sequence of Hayley's book, that the meeting took place between Meyer, Romney, and his biographer, at which the latter used his strongest arguments to dissuade his friend from seeking to become a member of the Royal Academy—a piece of stupid interference which cannot be sufficiently blamed. Meyer was most anxious that Romney should join the body of which he was himself a member. He had a high appreciation of Romney's abilities, so high indeed, that he suggested that his friend might in time aspire to the honour of the Presidentship. It would, no doubt, have been an excellent thing for Romney had he listened to Meyer, not only for his art, but also because it would have helped to break down the reserve which marked his intercourse with the majority of his fellow artists, and to lessen the suspicion which caused him to regard most of them as his enemies. It is only fair, however, to allow Hayley to give his own reasons for so vigorously combating the suggestion. 'I must confess,' he says, 'that I took an opposite side of the question, and used the many arguments, which my intimacy with the painter suggested, to guard him against the incessant disquietude and vexation, which I imagined his connexion with the Academy must inevitably produce. As the arguments were chiefly founded on the mental peculiarities of my friend, they were far from evincing any sort of disrespect towards a society, which is justly entitled to national regard. I may yet observe how subsequent events afforded me reason to rejoice, that I had endeavoured to suppress, and not to quicken that particular ambition, which a benevolent artist, whom I sincerely loved and admired, had wished to kindle in the bosom of our friend. If Reynolds, who certainly possessed, in a consummate degree, that mild wisdom, and conciliating serenity of temper, which Romney as certainly wanted, if Reynolds could ever find his seat of dignity (so perfectly merited) a thorny situation, that he was eager to relinquish, the more apprehensive, and more hasty spirit of Romney would have been utterly distracted in a post so ill

[1] See page 268.

suited to a mind of sensibilities infinitely too acute for the peaceful enjoyment of a high public station.'

Hayley persuaded himself that Romney was quite in accord with this appreciation of his 'sensibilities.' 'The more he reflected on the peculiarities of his own disposition,' we are told, 'the more he was convinced, that the comfort of his life, and his advancement in art, would be most easily, and most effectually promoted by his setting limits to his passion for popular applause, and confining the display of his works, whether portraits or fancy pictures, to the circle of his own domestic gallery, which gradually became a favorite scene of general resort.' It is certainly true that at this time he had more commissions than he could undertake with justice to himself.

In 1784 he painted the portrait of David Hartley, Minister Plenipotentiary for settling the terms of peace with America, which his son notes as a fine work; and, among others, that of Mrs. Russell, wife of Mr., afterwards Sir Henry, Russell, and her little son, in which she is holding the child on a table in order that he may look at himself in a mirror, one of the most perfect representations of a mother and child among the many fine subjects of this kind which he accomplished (see Plate XII.); Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, in his robes of the Garter; and Dr. Farmer, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

In the following year he painted a charming 'half-length' of Mrs. Smith, as a wood nymph, for Sir Simeon Stuart. This picture was left on Romney's hands, and it was not until six years later that the lady, then known as Mrs. Selby, paid the balance of the money and took it away. 'She was represented sitting on the ground,' says the painter's son, 'and playing on a flageolet; her hair hung beautifully over her forehead in spiral ringlets, and her drapery was of a pink colour, simple and elegant, after the Grecian style.'

This picture, which measures 46½ in. × 58 in., was lent by the Rev. Canon Phillpotts to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1882, under the title of 'Lady Hamilton' (No. 247), and is now in the collection of Miss Alice de Rothschild. It is a small full-length figure reclining beneath a tree, turned to the left, in red and blue drapery, and holding a shepherd's pipe in her hand. Her head is turned towards the spectator over her left shoulder, both shoulder and arm being bare. A distant landscape fills the background. It was engraved in mezzotint in 1906 under the erroneous title of 'Lady Hamilton.'

MRS. GEORGE WILSON AND HER DAUGHTER

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE EARL OF LATHOM

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MRS. WILBRAHAM BOOTLE

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE EARL OF LATHOM

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In the same year he was at work upon the portrait of the beautiful Miss Shakespeare, afterwards Mrs. Oliver, one of the pictures of which John Romney makes particular mention as a good example of his father's rapid method of painting. Some time after sitting she wished to have her baby included in the picture, and Romney accordingly represented it sleeping upon her lap, completely finishing it in half an hour, 'and with such truth of nature as to impress the spectator with an idea of hearing it respire.' While she was sitting, he received through the post a sonnet in its praise, beginning 'How great thy art, O Romney!' from one of the lady's admirers, signed 'U.B.,' and dated October 17th, 1785.

Among his other portraits of 1785 were a 'three-quarters' of Edmund Burke; Mrs. Boughton Rouse, a fine full-length, painted before the lady became Lady Rouse-Boughton;[1] Lady Balgonie and her boy; Mrs. Ford and child, for Governor Johnstone; Mrs. and Miss Beresford; and Mrs. Thomas Raikes. (See Plate XIII.)

His son did not find it easy to give a precise date to many of his 'fancy' subjects, 'because they were generally painted at stolen intervals,' but he considered 'The Sempstress' and 'Absence,' to be of about this period, of which the former, a portrait of Miss Lucy Vernon, as already noted, was bought by Admiral Vernon, while the other remained in the biographer's hands.

Among his sitters in 1786 may be mentioned the two sons of Mr. Wilbraham Bootle;[2] Mrs. Smith and child, a whole length which went to Carolina; the Ladies Caroline and Elizabeth Spencer, daughters of the Duke of Marlborough, the beautiful picture now in the collection of Mr. C. J. Wertheimer, and known as 'Beauty and the Arts';[3] and Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, without his robes, for his son, Mr. Edward Law (Lord Ellenborough), which appears to be the portrait now in Peterhouse College, Cambridge. Romney had already painted him twice, once for Sir Thomas Rumbold, in 1777, and again in 1783, for his son, Dr. John Law, Bishop of Clonfert. Dr. Law was a fellow-countryman of his, having been born at Buckcrag, in Cartmel, about fifteen miles from Romney's native place. In this year he also painted Mrs. Jordan as 'Peggy' in the *Country Girl*, which was bought by the Duke of Clarence. This is the fine full-length in which she is shown moving across the room, looking at the spectator over her shoulder, her hands held in front of her with fingers spread out and

[1] Exhibited in the Birmingham Art Gallery, 1897.

[2] See page 295.

[3] See Plate XIV.

pressed together at the tips. There are at least three versions of this picture in existence, all from Romney's own brush, in the collections of Sir Edward Tennant, the late Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, and Lord Falkland respectively. The last-named was lent to the second Romney Exhibition, 1901, No. 16. John Ogborne engraved this picture in stipple in 1788.

XIV

IN the spring of 1786 Romney lost his beautiful model. It is impossible to speak without contempt of Charles Greville's method of ridding himself of a mistress, to whom he was closely attached, when the state of his finances became too embarrassed to allow him to keep up the modest establishment at Paddington Green. His maternal uncle, Sir William Hamilton, English ambassador at the Court of Naples, and only two years a widower, coming home on leave of absence in 1784, had been greatly fascinated by the lady's loveliness, and two years afterwards showed little hesitation in listening to Greville's cold-blooded suggestion that he should take her off his hands. This is not the place in which to enter into a discussion of the complex reasons which gradually influenced the prudent Greville to take this course. They were largely financial ones. Sir William had intimated to his nephew that he might regard himself as his heir; but there was nothing to prevent his uncle marrying again. A close attachment to the fair Emma might, however, prevent fresh matrimonial designs on the part of the older man. Greville's own inclinations, too, were turning towards a wife as a way out of his difficulties. The lady he thought might suit him was Lord Middleton's youngest daughter; in the end, however, he died a bachelor. He cautiously unmasked his batteries in a series of letters to Naples, ending with one of brutal frankness which had the desired effect, Hamilton, his senior by twenty years, readily acquiescing in his plans.

Sir William, who was a connoisseur of the fine arts, and posed as a judge of beautiful things, pronounced Emma to be 'better than anything in nature. In her particular way she is finer than anything that is to be found in antique art.' Between them, by playing upon her fondness for music, they persuaded her that a few months spent in study in Italy would be to her great advantage, and she accordingly set out on March 14th, with her mother, 'Mrs. Cadogan,' and Gavin Hamilton, the antiquary, who acted as escort. She went in the full belief that her visit was to be a short one, and that Greville intended

to marry her. He himself promised to join her in the following October for this purpose, and there is little doubt that if she had known that he meant the parting to be a final one, she would have refused to go. On arriving in Naples, the elaborate preparations made by Sir William for her comfort, and the warmth of his welcome and his attentions, roused her suspicions, and the quick-witted girl soon divined to what base plot she had been a victim. The letters she wrote to Greville during the next fourteen weeks, are ample proof that she was deeply in love with him, and almost frantic for him to hasten to her side to free her from the embarrassment of his uncle's solicitations.

'I feel more and more unhappy at being separated from you,' she wrote, 'and if my fatal ruin depends on seeing you, I will and *must* at the end of the sumer. For to live without you is imposible. I love you to that degree that at this time there is not a hardship upon hearth either of poverty, cold, death, or even to walk barefooted to Scotland to see you, but what I wou'd undergo. Therefore my dear, dear Greville, if you do love me, for my sake, try all you can to come hear as soon as posible. . . . I respect Sir William. . . . But he can never be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend. He never can be my lover. You do not know how good Sir William is to me. He is doing everything he can to make me happy.'

And again, a month or two later:—'I am now onely writing to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is onely a farewell. Sure I have deserved this for the sake of the love you once had for me. . . . I have been from you going of six months, and you have wrote one letter to me, enstead of which I have sent fourteen to you. So pray let me beg of you, my much loved Greville, only one line from your dear, dear hands. . . . I find life is insuportable without you. Oh! my heart is intirely broke. Then for God's sake, my ever dear Greville, do write to me some comfort. I don't know what to do. I am now in that state, I am incapable of anything. . . . I am poor, helpless, and forlorn. I have lived with you 5 years, and you have sent me to a strange place, and no one prospect but thinking you was coming to me. Enstead of which I was told to live, you know how, with Sir William. No, I respect him, but, no, never shall he peraps live with me for a little while, like you, and send me to England. What is to become of me? But excuse me, my heart is ful. I tel you give me one guiney a week for everything, and live with me, and I will be contented.'

Greville only wrote to her once, and then, after a long silence, she received a second letter from him early in August, in which he advised her to yield to Sir William's suit. Entreaties having failed, and feeling that she had entirely lost his affection, she resorted to threats. 'As to what you write to me to oblidge Sir William,' she replied in anger, 'I will not answer you. For oh, if you knew what pain I feel in reading those lines. . . . Nothing can express my rage! I am all madness! Greville to advise me! you that used to envy my smiles! Now with cool indifference to advise me thus. Oh that, worst of all! But I will not, no, I will not rage. If I was with you, I would murder you, and myself too. Nothing shall ever do for me but going home to you. If that is not to be, I will except nothing. I will go to London, their go into every excess of vice till I dye. My fate is a warning to young whomen never to be two good. For now you have made me love you, you have made me good; you have abandoned me, and some violent end shall finish our connexion, if it is to finish. But oh, Greville, you cannot, you must not give me up. You have not the heart to do it. You love me I am sure; and I am willing to do everything in my power—and what will you have more? and I only say this for the last time. I will neither beg nor pray. Do as you like.' Then in a postscript she added:—'It is not your interest to disoblige me, for you don't know the power I have hear. Onely I will never be his mistress. If you affront me, I will make him marry me.' Even this serious threat, for Greville was heir to his uncle, and his only chance of a substantial income was in succeeding to Sir William's property, failed in its effect, and in the following November Emma gave way to the continual pressure brought upon her, and became the ambassador's mistress, with the fixed intention of inducing him to make her Lady Hamilton as soon as possible. There is no need, in a life of Romney, to tell in detail this sordid, pitiful story; but throughout these first few months of doubt and anxiety, when the suspicion of Greville's base desertion of her gradually became a certainty, she could have little time or inclination to give to thoughts of the happy hours spent in the London studio, which her presence had filled with glamour and inspiration for the painter.

Sir William wrote to ask Romney and Hayley to visit him in Naples, hoping that their presence, and the happy business of once more sitting almost daily to her favourite painter, would help to reconcile her to her position; but neither of them was able to accept

the invitation, though, no doubt, Romney would have been only too glad to have gone had it been possible.

Two years later, Greville, writing to Romney on August 8th, 1788, with reference to his own and Sir William Hamilton's account for pictures, tells the painter that 'I heard last week from Mrs. Hart, she desired me to tell you that she hoped to captivate you by her voice next spring, and that few things interest her more than the remembrance which you and Mr. Hayley honour her with.'

Very happily for Romney's peace of mind, his thoughts were busily occupied, shortly after her departure, with the details of an undertaking which he felt confident would provide him with a magnificent opportunity for the full display of his talents, in what he regarded as a far higher field of art than mere portraiture. This was Alderman Boydell's ambitious project of a 'Shakespeare Gallery,' to consist of a complete illustration of the whole of the plays by the leading artists of the day, into which the painter threw himself heart and soul in the winter of 1786. 'His enthusiasm in favour of that undertaking was at one time so great,' says his son, 'that he would have painted gratis rather than that it should not have taken place.'

There is some dispute, and some uncertainty, as to whom the origin of the scheme was due. John Romney asserts emphatically that his father, who was then at work on a picture from *The Tempest*, was the first to suggest the Gallery to the Boydells. 'The idea of it originated from himself individually; he had often ruminated upon it in his solitary hours; for he had always regarded Shakspeare as an author abounding in those picturesque conceptions and representations which may be so easily transferred to the canvass by an imaginative painter. But at a dinner given by Mr. Josiah Boydell, at Westend, in 1787, when Shakspeare became the topic of conversation (induced probably by the circumstances of Mr. Romney's being at that time engaged in painting *The Tempest*, in which Mr. Hayley had sat as the model for Prospero,)—he with his usual ardour and enthusiasm, then gave utterance to his conceptions, and suggested the plan of a National Gallery of pictures painted from that great dramatist, which would be both honourable to the country, and to the poet, and contribute essentially to the advancement of historical painting. The idea being in unison with the feelings of the company, was received with rapture.' Hayley gives the date of this Hampstead dinner as Saturday, November 4th, 1786. The guests included West,

Hayley, Paul Sandby, Hoole, the translator of Ariosto, Daniel Braithwaite, George Nicol, and Romney. Nicol also claimed to be the originator of the scheme, but John Romney infers that he had no right to this honour, and that he merely suggested that it should take the form of a fine edition of the plays illustrated with engravings from the pictures which were to form the Gallery.

Hayley's account does not agree at all points with this. He asserts that the plan was first mooted by the Alderman himself during a conversation in Romney's house at which Hayley was present. 'The professional, and the patriotic enthusiasm of the painter kindled at the first mention of the idea; and he immediately offered, in the most liberal manner, to devote whatever powers he might possess to a friendly promotion of a project, that could hardly fail to interest every lover of the arts and of England. At the same time he generously suggested to the sanguine projector, the perils, which might attend the conduct of an enterprise so important. He thought the painters ought to shew their liberality, and public spirit, by working, in support of such an undertaking, without any prospect of great emolument; he named a moderate sum for pictures of the largest size; a sum, which however inadequate it might appear to the labour, he declared he should himself be willing to accept on the occasion, if generally established among all the artists of eminence.'

Again, in a letter addressed to R. V. Sadleir in December 1786, Hayley asks:—'Have you observed the noble project now in agitation, for the honour of Shakespeare, and the encouragement of historical painting? I had the pleasure of being a little instrumental in setting this noble idea afloat. But it is to our dear Romney, that England is chiefly indebted for a scheme that promises, I think, to reflect great honour on our country. I will tell you all the private history of the project's formation when I have the pleasure of seeing you.'

According to Allan Cunningham, the original idea of the gallery has been claimed at different times for Fuseli, West, Romney, Nichol, and Boydell, and he states that the first-named declared that it occurred to his fancy as he gazed on the wonders of the Vatican.

Shortly after the meeting at Westend, John Romney was present at a second dinner held to discuss the project, when several artists were among the guests, including Westall and Farington. Sir Joshua, he says, had been invited to co-operate, but was hanging back, on account of Romney's connection with it. However, he was not proof

against an offer of one thousand guineas, half paid in advance, for a picture from 'Macbeth.' West got the same amount for his 'King Lear,' whereas Romney only asked six hundred for 'The Tempest,' and afterwards gave the Boydells 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions' for nothing. 'He was not even paid this sum till many years after. By withdrawing his labour from portraiture to the performance of this picture (The Tempest) he lost more than two thousand guineas. Not to mention the waste of much valuable time and labour expended in preparing other pictures, which were rendered frustrate by the hasty completion of the Gallery. His enthusiasm, however, soon began to cool when he discovered that the Boydells were making a commercial speculation of it, which was in fact the cause of its failure.'[1]

Some kind of dispute certainly arose as to the payment of Romney's share in the undertaking. Although quite prepared to accept the more moderate sum for his contributions, he felt some natural indignation that Reynolds and certain others should be rewarded on a much more liberal scale. His protests did not arise so much from a mere love of money, as from wounded pride at what he considered to be a slight put upon his art.

If Hayley, who continually dwells on the ultra-sensitiveness of Romney's nature, is to be believed, the possibilities of this important undertaking threw him into 'great agitation.' 'He had long expressed a very anxious wish to find some promising field, in which he might endeavour to obtain distinction in the higher province of his art,' he writes. About this time Reynolds had received a commission to paint a picture for the Empress of Russia, and had produced for the purpose his 'Infant Hercules.' Hayley urged Romney to beat his rival in the same field, suggesting that he should choose some subject from the life of Peter the Great, and send the work as a present to St. Petersburg.

Romney, whose imagination was always easily excited by such suggestions, at once proceeded to plan out the picture; but, as had so often happened, the impetus soon died away, and, his commissions for portraits standing in the way, the scheme came to nothing. The idea of painting from his favourite, Shakespeare, was much more alluring to his spirit, for he always professed the greatest admiration for the plays, though, if Hayley is to be believed, he was so desultory a

[1] John Romney, p. 152.

reader that it is doubtful if he ever perused two consecutive acts of one of them without interruption. He could only display concentration when his art was in question. In reading or writing his attention was rapidly exhausted, and his mind became fatigued; and he had, according to the same source, an intense dislike to the mere manual act of writing, which is 'the more to be regretted, because he had a fund of original ideas relating to his own art, and also such an uncommon energy of mind, that, with a moderate application to the pen, he might have rendered himself a writer of very powerful eloquence.'

By the spring of 1787, Romney had thought out a number of subjects for the Boydell Gallery. He had progressed so far with the designs for some of them that they were ready to be transferred to canvas. Among these were, 'The Banquet,' and the 'Cavern Scene' from *Macbeth*, and the subject from the first act of *The Tempest*. Others he had actually begun to paint, such as 'Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page,' from the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which the heads were finished; while he had also made great progress with another representing 'Margery Jourdain and Bolingbroke conjuring up the Fiend,' but in this last he was anticipated by Opie. These two incomplete works perished through exposure to the weather during the first winter after he had removed to his Hampstead house, together with many other canvases, which, owing to want of room indoors, were stacked away in an open corridor. Another Shakespearean picture he worked upon at this time was 'Lady Hamilton in the character of the Maid of Orleans,' which was intended to be a companion to his 'Cassandra.' This was bought in its unfinished state at the sale of his pictures by one of his pupils, Thomas Stewardson.

In the beginning he was full of enthusiasm for the scheme, and planned other pictures in addition to those mentioned, but when his first ardour had a little cooled, his over-sensitive, suspicious nature came into play, and conjured up difficulties which he had not the strength of mind to overcome. 'When he perceived,' says John Romney, 'that it was the intention of the Boydells to employ the older and established masters no more than was sufficient to give an impulse to the undertaking, and to complete it by the works of young artists for low prices:—that extraordinary haste was used to bring it to a conclusion, so that, instead of having some attractive novelties every year to keep alive the public interest, the whole display was made nearly at once;—and that, in consequence, indifference on the part of the public was already beginning to shew itself—he directed his attention to other

objects, regretting that disinterestedness and liberality were qualities little appreciated among dealers and speculators.'

In addition to his 'Tempest' picture, he intended to paint a second subject from the same play, but this purpose was never carried out. This was due in part to his relations with the Boydells, which had become a little strained, and also to his inability to work at the speed they demanded, which in no way suited his methods, except in the case of portraits. The passage selected was from the end of the first act, where Prospero exclaims to Miranda:

'Hence; hang not on my garments,'

including Ariel's song, 'Come unto these yellow sands.'

John Romney describes this picture with a filial exaggeration of praise out of all proportion to the merits of the 'rapid and dashing Sketch' which was all that his father made. If this, he was of opinion, 'had been enlarged into a picture, and finished in his usual style of painting, it would have been one of the finest pictures in the world. No fancy-subject could be more finely conceived, and in the execution there is no doubt but it would have displayed all that playfulness and witchery of character, and that fantastic grace, which his fine taste, and exquisite feeling enabled him so well to communicate to his Fairy-figures.' It was to be painted in the manner of Correggio.[1]

Prospero and Miranda were placed on the left of the picture, the former with his back to the spectator, his face in profile, and his right arm raised above his head, pointing towards Ariel and his fellow sprites among the clouds. 'In his whole person there is an almost supernatural dignity and grandeur: and in his countenance, which is directed towards Ferdinand, is depicted a mild and placid gravity, combined with an assumed austerity. Miranda, with her breast and shoulders bare, hangs suppliant on her father's garments in the most bewitching attitude. . . . Her hair is loosely braided round her head, and in its redundance, hangs floating in the air. She gazes with admiration and tenderness on Ferdinand, who is placed somewhat to the right from the centre of the picture. He is seminude, by which his fine muscular form is seen to advantage. . . . and as he advances up the beach, is at that moment arrested by the rebuke of Prospero. It was Mr. Romney's intention to have exerted all his powers, both in colour and design, in the representation of this

[1] See page 78.

manly figure.' Beyond him a group of fairies was shown dancing on the yellow sands.

The history of the Shakespeare Gallery may be sketched briefly here; Romney's work for it will be spoken of in greater detail later on. John Boydell was the maker of his own fortunes. As a youth he was so attracted by the fine arts that he left home, walked on foot from Shropshire to London, and entered as a student in the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and afterwards became apprenticed to W. H. Toms, the engraver. In 1741 he began to publish a series of views in and about London, drawn and engraved by himself. The size was folio and the price, one shilling, was engraved on the margin of each plate. The encouragement bestowed on these works by the public induced Boydell to extend his plan, until it comprised views throughout England and Wales. This undertaking was a great success, and it was to it that the future Alderman owed the fortune and fame he afterwards acquired.

He soon enlarged the scope of his enterprise, employing other engravers on plates after pictures by the old masters, as well as works by the leading painters of the day, which soon had not only a wide sale at home, but were in great demand abroad. The Shakespeare Gallery was to be the crown and glory of his career, and it started with every sign of success and popular approval. Almost all the best painters contributed to it, and Richard Cumberland proclaimed its merits in the pages of his *Observer*, in the guise of a translation from a Greek manuscript, in which he praises Romney, 'this modest painter,' under the name of Timanthes. Sixty-five pictures had been engraved for it by 1791, and one hundred and sixty-two by 1802. The scale of payment was liberal for those days, and a gallery was built on purpose for the exhibition of the pictures in Pall Mall. Boydell, in his preface to the catalogue published in 1789, says:—'In the progress of the fine Arts, though foreigners have allowed our lately acquired superiority of engraving, and readily admitted the great talents of the principal painters, yet they have said, with some severity, and, I am sorry to say, with some truth, that the abilities of our best artists are chiefly employed in painting portraits of those who in less than half a century, will be lost in oblivion, while the noblest part of the art, historical painting, is much neglected. To obviate this national reflection was the principal cause of the present undertaking.'

The estimation in which Boydell was held by many of the painters

who worked for him is to be found in numerous contemporary references. Northcote, in one of his letters, says:—'My picture of 'The Death of Wat Tyler' was painted in the year 1786 for my friend and patron Alderman Boydell, who did more for the advancement of the arts in England than the whole mass of nobility put together. He paid me more nobly than any other person has done; and his memory I shall ever hold in reverence.'

Northcote was another claimant, at least indirectly, for the honour of first suggesting the great Shakespeare Gallery scheme. 'About this time,' he says, 'it was that Alderman Boydell's grand scheme of making the Shakspere Gallery and publishing that magnificent edition was set on foot, when I was immediately employed very considerably in that work, as may be seen from the number of the prints from my pictures for that collection. It will also appear in what rank I stand as to my abilities as an artist.

'However, one of the principal pictures of mine, that of the "Murder of the Princes in the Tower," was painted previously to this scheme and had been some little time in Boydell's possession before the splendid edition of Shakspere had been thought upon. This picture had been publicly exhibited at his house in Cheapside, and it seems not unlikely that this very picture first suggested the scheme to their minds, as it had been greatly noticed and admired. It was the first picture that the Boydells ever had of me, and they had bespoke a companion to it when they first informed me of the Shakspere plan.'

But the great scheme, which was to do so much for historical painting in England, was doomed to failure, largely owing to the sudden and almost complete cessation of any foreign market for the engravings brought about by the French Revolution. Boydell's financial difficulties grew acute, and in 1804 he was obliged to ask Parliament to give its sanction to the disposal of his property by lottery. In a letter read to the House of Commons, he stated that he had laid out more than £350,000 'in promoting the commerce of the fine arts in this country,' some £30,000 of which had been spent on the Shakespeare Gallery.

So rapid was the sale of the lottery tickets, that, on the day of the Alderman's death, December 12th, 1804, at the age of eighty-five, not one of the twenty-two thousand of them remained unsold. The principal prize—the Shakespeare Gallery—was won by Tassie, the gem modeller,

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who sold the property by auction on May 17th, 1805, and the two following days. The prices fetched by Romney's pictures at this sale compare very favourably with those given for the works of most of the other artists. Charles Greville gave £53 11s. 0d., for 'Cassandra Raving,' and John Green £52 10s. 0d. for 'Prospero and Miranda,' while Michael Bryan paid £65 2s. 0d. for 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions.' On the first day, 'The Forest of Arden, with the wounded Stag,' given in the catalogue to William Hodges, but said to have been painted by Hodges, Romney,[1] and Gilpin in conjunction, was knocked down to Sir Charles Burrell for £78 15s. 0d. Reynolds' pictures went for the largest amounts, 'The Death of Cardinal Beaufort' for £530 5s. 0d., 'Macbeth and the Witches,' £378, and 'Puck, or Robin Goodfellow,' £215 5s. 0d.; and examples by West and Northcote fetched two or three times the sums given for Romney's contributions to the Gallery. The only piece of sculpture in the collection, 'The Apotheosis of Shakespeare,' by Banks, for which Boydell had paid five hundred guineas, was reserved by Tassie, and given by him to be placed as a monument on the Alderman's tomb.

[1] Hayley sat for the figure of Jaques, Romney's sole share in the picture.

XV

IN the spring of 1787 Hayley found his usual room at Cavendish Square occupied by John Romney, who was recovering from a severe illness, and so was obliged to take shelter with his friend Clyfford, the singer, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He and Romney used to meet at breakfast every morning, between six and seven, at the rooms of Dr. Warner, afterwards chaplain to Lord Gower, when Ambassador in Paris, in Barnard's Inn. Romney was then at work on the portrait of Lady Hamilton as 'Sensibility,' and on May 5th, Hayley, accompanied by Mrs. Clyfford and her little niece, went in search of the sensitive plant which was required before the finishing touches could be given to the canvas.[1] The botanist, Mr. Lee, from whom they obtained it, greatly pleased his visitor by calling him 'a very great man,' and refused all payment for the plant. In return Hayley took Miss Lee to see Romney's pictures, and made the old gentleman promise to visit him in Sussex.

Romney went earlier than usual to Eartham this year, for the purpose of planning out his 'Tempest' picture. His friend Meyer, the miniature painter, was there, recovering from an illness; but, thinking that his presence appeared to be in some degree irksome to the artist, who wished for solitude in order to give himself up completely to his studies, he very generously cut short his visit. Romney, indeed, confessed, when Hayley told him of this, 'that he wished to be left very much to himself.'

'The scene, on which he now resided,' says Hayley, 'was happily suited to sequestered study. At a time, when I was so much troubled with a tendency to inflammation in the eyes, that I could not ride in the open air without suffering, I had built a riding-house of wood; its size and situation rendered it peculiarly delightful to the fancy of Romney, as a study for his art. It was distant from the dwelling-house, and screened on three sides by foliage; in its front to the south a very broad gravel walk with borders of evergreens, commanded an

[1] See page 115.

extensive view of sloping and level land, terminated by the sea, which when the spectator was so stationed, that his eyes lost the intermediate vale, had the appearance of being delightfully near to the building, especially when the water reflected a brilliant sky. In this favorite retirement, which afforded him a walk of a hundred feet under cover, Romney began to meditate on the various pictures from Shakespeare, that he hoped to produce; and here he formed on a very large canvas, the first sketch of his scene from the Tempest.

'It was in truth a formidable enterprize for a painter, who had so long devoted himself to the quiet business of painting portraits, to undertake to fill an immense canvas with a multitude of figures under vehement agitation, and to use the forcible phrase of Shakespeare, in 'a fever of the mad.' The intense desire of executing a very grand, and sublime picture, and the apprehension of failing in it, created many a tempest in the fluctuating spirits of Romney. He often trembled for himself; and his intimates who most endeavoured to animate and support his courage, were not without their fears of his sinking under this mighty undertaking. Having sketched at Eartham a beginning of his design, in some points happy, and in others unfortunate, he returned with his great canvas to London in the autumn. Rejoining him there in November, I had the pleasure of observing the progress he made in his arduous work, and of adding my influence to that of other friends, who were peculiarly solicitous to encourage him on this important occasion. In zeal, intelligence and affection, his pleasant friend Carwardine[1] was inferior to none.'

Carwardine tried to interest Lord Chancellor Thurlow in the Shakespeare undertaking. 'What!' said the latter, 'is Romney at work for it? He cannot paint in that style, it is out of his way; by God, he'll make a balderdash business of it.' Carwardine hinted that his lordship did not thoroughly know the painter, whose native modesty hindered him from showing his full powers. Thereupon Thurlow asked him to bring Romney to dinner that they might talk it over. Romney replied that he should be glad to talk with his lordship, 'for he has some grand ideas in his gloomy head,' but he refused to go to dinner. Carwardine, however, 'talked the terrified artist into spirits sufficient to make him go, with some pleasure, to this aweful dinner, of which you shall hear more in my next,' Hayley wrote to a friend, and in a later letter, he adds:—

'Carwardine tells me, their dialogue was highly entertaining to him,

[1] The Rev. Thomas Carwardine of Colne Priory.

as they debated several points with warmth, and spirit on both sides. They had no intruder to disturb the trio, and continued with their great host till ten in the evening.'

Romney and Thurlow held one another in mutual esteem. 'Each delighted in that energy of idea, and force of expression, which gave to their conversation a powerful and sometimes a rough spirit; for each could speak in a tone of the most refined, and endearing politeness, or with an asperity, sometimes ludicrous in the display of momentary spleen, and sometimes seriously alarming.'[1]

'Mr Romney,' said the Chancellor one day, 'before you paint Shakespeare, I advise you to read him.' Says Hayley—'The advice, though rude in its sound, was materially good; for Romney had a rapidity of fancy, too apt to indulge itself in desultory excursion. He was like a bee, who flies off from a flower, before he has gathered half the honey, that time would enable him to collect; but he was conscious of his defects, and grateful even for rough admonition.'

Romney, anxious that this 'Tempest' picture should be his masterpiece, thought that a renewed examination of Raphael's 'Cartoons' would give him fresh ideas for his great undertaking, so in November a small party was made up by Hayley, including Meyer, for a visit to Windsor. They found West at work there on his series of historical pictures, and the Academician politely deserted his easel to spend the day with a brother artist. Romney declared that 'he felt his mind invigorated, and enriched, by a new research into the merits of Raphael.'

Before Hayley returned to Sussex, he sat, at Romney's request, for his portrait in miniature to Miss Foldstone,[2] and also to Marchant, the gem-sculptor. 'The dear liberal *Pittore* has been throwing away above thirty guineas in procuring for himself different representations of my face,' he wrote to his wife. Romney had made Marchant's acquaintance in Rome, and had a sincere liking for him. He had just returned to London, and the painter hastened to give him a small commission, an onyx seal for his own use, with Hayley's head in intaglio. Miss Foldstone was a protégée of Romney's, 'a young female genius in miniature,' the same letter informs us, 'who at the age of seventeen, will, I trust, under his patronage, most comfortably raise, and support by her wonderful talent, a drooping family, consisting of a mother and six brothers and sisters. She is the child of an inferior painter, who suffered a palsy three years, and lately died. She is a pretty, modest, and sensible girl. . . . The miniature was regarded as a strong re-

[1] Hayley, page 131.

[2] Afterwards Mrs. Mee.

semblance; but the gem, which proved a cameo, instead of being as it was purposed at first, an intaglio, did not satisfy Romney, who had rather embarrassed than assisted the engraver, by giving him instructions with his pencil for the likeness, instead of leaving him to work according to his own view of the features he tried to represent.'

According to Hayley, Romney reduced the number of his sitters in 1787 in order to give more time to the 'Tempest' picture; but he nevertheless produced a great number of portraits, among which may be mentioned a three-quarters of 'Mrs. Ainslie and her Child'; a half-length of 'Mrs. Billington,'[1] which was still in the artist's possession at the time of his death; and a 'half-whole-length' of 'Bishop Watson' without his episcopal robes. 'Certainly,' writes his son, 'a finer portrait was never produced; it was, indeed, perfect in every respect.' The sitter and the painter were nearly of the same age, and came from the same neighbourhood.

Early in 1788, he had a somewhat severe fit of illness, and he wrote on March 15th to his friend, saying—'I have not done anything to the Cassandra, nor to Sensibility, since you left me, nor made any advance in the Tempest-scene, the last two months. . . . I began to write yesterday, but could not get on, I was so weak. I am much better to-day, and to-morrow begin to work.'

In the spring he managed to finish his second portrait of Miss Seward, which was to be a present to her father. Her friend, George Hardinge, who appears to have seen it in the previous year in Romney's studio, or, perhaps, only to have known that it was in progress, wrote to her:—'You write like an angel, and I would go to the end of the world for a lock of your hair; and so pray send me one at the two months' end—and let me carry off your picture by force from Romney.' The poetess wrote to Eartham on May 10th:—'You have made my poor old father very happy, by kindly exerting yourself with our beloved Romney, to procure us the possession of that highly valuable present, which the paternal eye longs to behold, ere its light grows too dim to discern the excellence of art.'

In a letter to the same friend, dated June 1st, she describes its arrival: 'I scarce know how . . . to express our gratitude for your having persuaded Romney to gratify my father, by his possessing, ere he dies, the promised treasure. It arrived late last night; rich, adorned, and

[1] See page 229.

invaluable, by the Romneyean powers. My poor invalid was fast asleep in his bed—Lister and Cary, our young bards, were supping with me. They were on fire with curiosity, while the nails were drawing, and highly gratified with contemplating the most masterly portrait their young eyes had ever beheld. I placed it by my father's bedside at seven this morn. He wept with joy when I undrew the curtain—wanted to kiss it, and has talked and looked at it all day. I send some verses to Romney, by this post, which but ill express my gratitude. This welcome guest made happy faces at our dinner-board to-day.'

Two days later she wrote to another friend, Dr. Warner:—'The picture with which Romney has so nobly presented us, arrived late on Friday night. It makes my poor father very happy. I am flattered by its being thought like me by yesterday's callers!—ah! those callers, they run away with all my leisure; yet I cannot help being glad to see them come in, so strong is my native love of society—every body that looks benevolent, and says nothing ill-natured, interests me.'

To Romney himself, on May 31st, she sent a set of 'impromptu' verses, describing the great event, in which Cary[1] and Lister are spoken of as

> 'Two wondrous youths, who strike the Delian lyre,
> Ere manhood's hour, with all the poet's fire,
> Sat by thy friend in luxury of praise,
> A raptur'd descant on Hayleyan lays;
> When sudden thro' the swiftly open'd door
> The long wish'd prize a smiling servant bore.
> With eager eyes the youthful poets hail
> The heav'd dismission of each tardy nail,
> Till to the sight thy breathing canvass shone
> And made the magic of thy pencil known.'

'The above verses,' she concludes, 'have faintly, and with little happiness expressed my father's sense, and my own, of the very great obligation you have conferred upon us: neither verse nor prose can express *how* affectionately we shall always be,—My dear Mr. Romney, your devoted admirers and grateful friends,

'Thomas and Anna Seward.'

'Every body here, who, as yet, have seen the picture, think it still more pleasing than the first, and more like me for having that smile, which *they say* is habitual to my countenance—also from the hair being

[1] The translator of 'Dante.'

more gracefully disposed—of the likeness I must leave other people to judge—but of the exquisite excellence as a portrait, supposing I knew nothing of the original, I cannot but be conscious.'

In a later letter to Hayley, written on November 9th of the same year, she says: 'I hope the dear Romney is well, to whom I beseech you will say for me everything that is affectionate and grateful. Mrs. Knowles passed a fortnight with me in August. She says Romney's picture of me is one of the finest portraits she ever saw. I sent for the handsomest frame London would produce. It "emblazes, with its breadth of gold," the centre of the dining-room, opposite the fire-place. I keep the one by poor Kettle, for which you know I sat at nineteen, as a foil to Titiano's, and am diverted with people taking it for my mother's picture, after they have looked at Romney's.'

Eight years later she wrote of it as 'a graceful, expressive portrait, and some people think it like, others deny the resemblance.'

In the portrait of her given to Hayley she was represented in a white dress. In the one sent to Lichfield she is wearing black, with her left elbow resting on a table covered with writing materials, and her head leaning on her left hand, while in the right she holds a roll of papers; she is looking upwards, with a slight smile on her lips. This picture is now in the possession of Mr. T. L. Burrowes, of Stradone, Co. Cavan. Miss Seward, in writing, on November 5th, 1807, to Sir Walter Scott, who edited her *Letters* for publication, tells him:—'On Monday last my young cousin, Miss Seward, whom you saw at my house, was very advantageously married to Major Burrowes, late of the 38th regiment of foot, the heir to a large estate, and in himself all that a reasonable young woman can desire in a husband; esteemed and beloved by all who know him.' The portrait, no doubt, on Miss Seward's death, followed Mrs. Burrowes to Ireland. It remained unknown to the general public until the Old Masters Exhibition held in Dublin in 1902, to which it was lent by Mr. Burrowes. (See Plate x.)

Little is known of the history of the earlier portrait, which, in all probability, remained in Hayley's possession until his death. It made an unexpected appearance at a sale held by Messrs. Foster & Co. on October 28th, 1903. It was catalogued as by an artist of the English school, and was said to be a portrait of Mrs. Siddons. The vendor was a Wandsworth mechanic, and the picture came into his possession through his wife, whose father bought it some years earlier with the other fixtures of a public-house of which he became the landlord. At

the time of the sale it was almost completely hidden by several coatings of varnish and dirt, and the first bid was one of ten shillings. In the end it was knocked down to Mr. Buttery, the well-known picture restorer, of Piccadilly, for 350 guineas. After careful cleaning it revealed itself not only as an excellent example of Romney's art, but as the long missing portrait of Miss Seward. The volume on the table by her side, labelled 'America,' no doubt refers to her early friendship with Major André, the devoted lover of Honora Sneyd, who was hanged as a spy during the American War. Her 'Monody' on André was published, together with certain of the Major's letters, in 1788. Frequent reference is made in her correspondence to this poem, which contained a bitter attack on Washington, which she withdrew in later editions. An engraving was made from one or other of these portraits by William Ridley, and published in the *Monthly Review* for February 1797, and a second one was done by Woolnoth for the *Beauties of Anna Seward*, which appeared in 1822.

A few days after the arrival of Miss Seward's verses, Romney received a letter from Flaxman, dated May 25th, 1788, from Rome, where he had been studying for some time. 'Having himself, though unfortunately late in life, experienced the great advantage to be derived from studying the works of the ancient Greek sculptors, and also those of Michael Angelo; he recommended to the young sculptor, by all means to visit Italy, and to fix himself in Rome for a length of time, where he might enjoy every facility of study, and where every thing that was great, or graceful in art, would be accessible to his genius: he did more—he offered to be useful to him in a pecuniary light, or in any way that might promote his professional views.'[1] Flaxman himself tells this incident in the contribution he made to Hayley's *Life* of the painter (p. 313). 'He was particularly delighted with youthful talents, and never neglected an opportunity of encouraging and recommending them. Once he endeavoured to press two hundred pounds on a young man going abroad to study, who was not in affluent circumstances, and on the money being refused, he exerted himself by recommendation and every means in his power, until he actually did render him much more important services.'

Throughout the year he remained far from well. For the sake of the fresh air he took lodgings at Hampstead, going out to sleep there every night, and returning to his studio early in the morning. Hayley began to grow very anxious as to the condition of his friend's health.

[1] John Romney, page 203.

'I was painfully alarmed by the deprest state of his spirits, and hope, that I contributed a little to their revival, as I happened to be near him at this time . . . I wished to take the convalescent painter into Sussex on my return, but his pressing engagements to different sitters detained him in London till the summer was advanced. He could not reach Eartham till August, and was rendered inactive by indisposition for some time after his arrival; but he revived as usual on the spot peculiarly favorable to his health, and continued to paint there with energy and success till near the end of September.' He was mainly occupied in making studies from Shakespeare during this visit.

On his return to London he made arrangements to receive no sitters before noon, so that he could give the best part of each morning to the 'Tempest' picture. Early in the winter Hayley came to town, partly on private business and 'partly in the hope of being useful to Romney, either by encouraging his apprehensive spirit or assisting him in the humble capacity of a painter's layman. It was generally a great relief and gratification to him to have the opportunity of conversing with an intimate confidential friend, while his pencil was employed.'

Among his portraits of 1788 were Mrs. Clements, a half-length, sent to Dublin, of which his son notes that it was painted in a beautiful pearly tone, 'which I do not remember to have observed in any other of his pictures'; Mrs. Arden[1] and child, half-length; the Rev. Dr. Parr, the celebrated scholar and controversialist, in his doctor's gown, three-quarters; the Duchess of Cumberland, half-length; the sons of Sir George Winn, 'half-whole-length'; Dr. Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury, half-length; and Miss Wallis in the characters of *Mirth and Melancholy* on a single canvas. Melancholy was represented as standing near the entrance of a gloomy cell, with her sister Mirth urging her with gentle force to join a joyous party dancing round a maypole on a distant hill. This was another of the pictures inherited by the painter's son.[2] He also painted in this year a group of Mrs. Gosling's three children.

The celebrated divine, John Wesley, also sat to him at Christmas, 1788-89, for Mrs. Tighe. Wesley says in his diary, under the date January 5th, 1789:—'At the earnest request of Mrs. T. I once more sat for my picture. Mr. Romney is a painter indeed. He struck off an exact likeness at once, and did more in an hour than Sir Joshua did in two.' The sitter was at that time, according to Walpole, 'a lean elderly man,

[1] This lady was a daughter of Richard Wilbraham Bootle, whose portrait and those of other members of his family are described on pages 294-5.

[2] Now at Petworth. See page 204.

fresh-coloured, his hair smoothly combed; but with a soupçon of curl at the ends. Wondrous clean, but as evidently an actor as Garrick.'

The original picture, which was engraved by J. Spilsbury in 1789, was at one time in the possession of the Rev. J. H. Butterworth, and until recently in that of Mr. Walter R. Cassels, who lent it to the Romney Exhibition in 1900. It fetched 530 guineas at Messrs. Christie's in the Butterworth sale in 1873, and at the same place on June 30th, 1906, when the Cassels collection was sold, it realised 720 guineas. It measures 30 in. × 25 in. A replica of it was exhibited at Oxford in 1906, lent by the Governing Body of Christ Church, which is believed to be one of two contemporary repetitions, differing from the original in having the dress trimmed with fur. It appears, however, to be merely a good copy.

The year 1789 was an uneventful one, devoted, as all his years were, to little else but hard work. His old friend Adam Walker was in London in the spring, exhibiting at Covent Garden Theatre his 'Eidouranion, or immense Orrery,' and Romney, Carwardine, and Hayley and his boy Tom went together to the pit one night to see it. Hayley was up again in November about his play *Marcella*, which through some misunderstanding, too long and dull to trouble about to-day, was produced at both houses at once. William Long and Romney, who went to see the Drury Lane version, reported to the author that 'nothing could be more infamous than their mode of exhibiting the piece.'

In October Romney sent back to Eartham the 'Sensibility' which had been lent to Boydell for engraving, together with the two figures of Sorrow and Joy in chiaroscuro, which have been already described.[1] Another incident of this year was the death of one of his earliest London friends, Meyer, the miniature painter, from a fever caught when working for some acquaintance at a contested election.

Among his portraits in 1789 was one of 'the beautiful, but frail' Mrs. Hodges, full-length, done for Walquier, the Brussels banker. She was represented in a pose something like Sir Joshua's 'Colonel Tarleton,' with her back to the spectator, stooping to tie her shoe string, and looking over her shoulder. 'It was a most delightful picture, but never had the advantage of being exhibited to the view of admiring Englishmen; for it was sent to Brussels before the French revolution. What became of it, and its wealthy possessor, when the French invaded Flanders, I have never heard,' writes his son. Other

[1] See page 115.

LADY HANMER

IN THE COLLECTION OF LORD KENYON

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MRS. JORDAN

FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER, BT.

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portraits of this year were a three-quarters of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and another of her half-whole-length; Mr. Edward Law (Lord Ellenborough) son of the Bishop of Carlisle, now in Peterhouse College, Cambridge; a group of Mr. Adye's children; the Rev. Dr. Paley, with his fishing-rod, painted for Dr. Law, when Bishop of Clonfert; the two Miss Beckfords; and the Earl of Westmoreland, for Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

When Paley first went to sit, he was accompanied by Dr. Law, and, being a man who did not trouble himself about appearances, his dress was not considered suitable, and so he was made to put on the Bishop's hat and coat. There seems to have been some slight misunderstanding about the price of this portrait. In the *Life of Paley* we are told that 'it was thought so good a painting, that when Doctor Law, then Bishop of Clonfert, called on Romney to pay him the stipulated price, the painter took up his fifty pounds with great dissatisfaction, at the same time observing, he had been offered twice as much for it.' John Romney says that this is not true. According to him, Lord Ellenborough, the Bishop's brother, paid sixty guineas for it on April 6th, 1791, the usual price for a picture of that size when Dr. Paley began to sit, on July 10th, 1789. Romney advanced his prices to seventy guineas in the following October, and very probably had forgotten, when receiving payment in 1791, the precise date of the first sitting. 'I am sure,' says his son, 'that Mr. Romney was perfectly incapable of making any charge which he did not at the time think just.'

It was not until the April of 1790 that Romney succeeded in finishing his 'Tempest' picture. 'There has been an anxiety labouring in my mind the greatest part of the last twelvemonth,' he writes. 'At times it had nearly overwhelmed me. I thought I should absolutely have sunk into despair. O what a kind friend is in those times! I thank God (whatever my picture may be) I can say this much, I am a greater philosopher, and a better christian.'

The relief of mind he felt upon the completion of this task was immense. 'He was happily conscious,' says Hayley, 'that it was the production of no ordinary painter, and he was also aware, that with considerable merit, it had striking defects, arising from his imperfect and fortuitous education in art, and from the habits of his professional life. There is great force, and magnificence, but not equal clearness of conception in the design, for the hurly-burly in the ship, and the cell

of the princely enchanter are unfortunately huddled together. This appeared to me a radical error in the original sketch, which the artist tried many expedients to counteract, but which, in my opinion he was never able completely to remedy. Yet the picture has the primary characteristic belonging to works of true genius, it seizes and it enchants, though it does not absolutely satisfy the mind.' (See Plate xv.)

No one of his friends was more enthusiastic over this picture than Dr. Warner, who took Lord Thurlow to see it. Dr. Warner had been recently appointed domestic chaplain to the young Lord Gower, whose father, the Marquis of Stafford, was so good a friend and generous a patron to Romney. Lord Gower had just become English ambassador in Paris, and the chaplain urged the artist to take early advantage of so favourable an opportunity for revisiting that city; and the invitation was accepted. Romney set out from Eartham on July 31st, accompanied by Hayley and the Rev. Thomas Carwardine. The travellers put up at the Hôtel de Modène. 'Here I cannot fail to remark,' writes Hayley, 'that the painter described as never to be seen at the tables of the great, except that of Lord Thurlow, might have been seen, not only dining repeatedly with the English Ambassador in Paris, but graciously conducted by that nobleman or his lady, to the houses of foreign artists and to such objects of curiosity, as they esteemed worthy of his notice.' The Embassy was in what was then known as the Hôtel de Monaco, in the rue St. Dominique, in the Faubourg St. Germain.

Romney spent much of his time in the study of pictures, particularly those in the Orleans Collection, which was dispersed shortly afterwards. He received much kindness from the young Duke of Chartres, and from Madame de Genlis, the accomplished 'governess' of the Royal family. Later on, when she visited London, Romney made a rapid but faithful sketch of her. The leading French artists paid him much attention. Both David and Greuze dined with him, and the former took him over the Luxembourg Gallery. Hayley says that 'the Splendor of Rubens did not strike us blind to the merit of David. His Death of Socrates, his Paris and Helen, and his Horatii, the picture on which he was then engaged, imprest us with considerable respect for his talents.'

John Romney prints two letters written to him by his father during this holiday. In the first he says:—

'I knew it would give you much pleasure to hear that Prince William has sat to me; and that the Prince of Wales has been at my house, and admired a new picture of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and told me he would sit to me when he returned from Brighton.' In a third letter, written three weeks after his return, he tells the same correspondent that he was taken ill the day after he reached Eartham again, 'and continued so till last Sunday, when I journeyed to London. I have been tolerable since, and gain health every day. I believe I caught cold in coming over the water.' He adds that he 'dined with the ambassador twice; they shewed great politeness in going out with us twice to see curiosities,' which hardly agrees with Hayley's statement that they dined repeatedly at the Embassy.

Among the inmates of Eartham at this period were Carwardine's two sons, who were pursuing their studies under Hayley's instruction, together with his own boy, Thomas Alphonso. The latter was Hayley's natural son, but the boy always regarded Mrs. Hayley as his mother, and that lady treated him with great kindness and affection. Mrs. Hayley, however, was now no longer a member of the Eartham house-party. Always excitable by nature, her mind became affected in 1786, and a separation was arranged in 1789. For the rest of her life she resided in Derby, in the house of a medical friend.

Miss Seward, in a letter to Mrs. Gell, dated December 3rd, 1797, very shortly after Mrs. Hayley's death, gives a clever sketch of that lady's character, too long to quote in its entirety, which shows how ill-suited the bard and his Eliza were for the permanent occupation of the same house. Mrs. Hayley had a sharp and satirical tongue, and was an unceasing talker, with a loud laugh, which no doubt, frequently jarred on the poet's nerves. 'She had a Gallic gaiety of spirit,' says Miss Seward, 'which the infelicities of her destiny could but transiently, however violently, impede. The short paroxysm of anguish passed, the tide of vivacity returned, and bore down everything before it. . . . Fire in her affections, frost in her sensations, she shrunk from the caresses even of the husband she adored. Hence, while she had a morbid degree of tenaciousness respecting his esteem and attention, she was incapable of personal jealousy; and would amuse herself with the idea of those circumstances, with which she could so perfectly well dispense, being engrossed by another. Alike during the years of their union, and in those of their separation, she gloried in the talents of her bard, as she used to call Mr. H., and delighted to praise his virtues,

perpetually producing specimens of the first, and giving instances of the latter. . . . With sportive fancy; with no inconsiderable portion of belles-lettres knowledge; with polite address, and an harmonious voice in speaking, and with the grace of correct and eloquent language; with rectitude of principles, unsuspecting frankness of heart, and extreme good humour; she was, strange to say! not agreeable, at least not permanently agreeable. The unremitting attention her manner of conversing seemed to claim; her singular laugh, frequent and excessive, past all proportion to its cause, overwhelmed, wearied, and oppressed even those who were most attached to her; who felt her worth, and pitied her banishment from the man on whom she doated—in whose fame she triumphed, tenacious of its claims, even to the most irritable soreness. Yet her rage for society, and excessive love of talking, were so ill calculated to the inclinations and habits of a studious recluse, as to render their living together inconsistent with the peace of either.'

On reaching Eartham from Paris, Romney was very pleased to find the new painting-room, which he had wished to be built at his own expense within the riding-house, ready for his use. It had a north sky-light, with a good fire-place, so that he could work in it even in unseasonable weather. 'In this apartment,' writes Hayley, 'we both hoped he might execute many works of imagination, as he proposed gradually to withdraw from the drudgery of his profession. For a few years it was occasionally of great use to him, and I shall mention several productions, that he began in his favorite room, but his health, already much enfeebled, allowed him not to realize in advanced life the magnificent projects of his enterprising fancy.' He was too ill to make any use of the room this year, for he was labouring 'under both a distempered mind and body,' as he put it in a letter to Hayley written on his return to town.

'Almost all the afflictions, that pressed on my friend, through the course of his life,' says his host, 'might be considered, by many persons, as nothing more than imaginary afflictions, but there are none perhaps more entitled to compassion. What can be more truly pitiable, than to see great talents frequently rendered inactive by those wonderful variations in the nervous system, that throw a shadowy darkness over the mind, and fill it with phantoms of apprehension.'

Among the portraits he painted in 1790 were fine ones of Dr. Fowler, Archbishop of Dublin, and Dr. Markham, Archbishop of

York. The last 'was a picture of uncommon merit, and inferior to none by any master.' It was painted without his robes, 'which gave additional simplicity and naturalness to the character. When Mr. Romney painted dignified characters, it was always his wish, if left to his own choice, to exclude from their dress all formal appendages of rank and profession; and to invest them with simplicity and grandeur. This was the reason why he preferred painting Bishops without their robes, and Doctors Watson and Paley with hats on. He began a full-length portrait of the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, with a hat on, for Colonel Johnes, of Hafod. But the latter gentleman's circumstances becoming embarrassed, Mr. Romney was not pressed to finish it, and the picture remained in that state at his death. The head, however, was afterwards sold to the Colonel.'[1]

Other sitters in 1790 were Mr. and Mrs. Drax-Grosvenor, and their child, a half-length, in an oval, and Mrs. Bonner and her child.

[1] John Romney, page 213.

XVI

BOTH in health and spirits Romney was far from well in 1791. At the beginning of May he wrote to Hayley apologising for not answering his letters, and saying what a great gratification it was to hear from him; 'but never more so than when my mind is labouring under some anxiety, and depression of spirits, which has indeed been the case with me for some time past. If there is a quality in man that approaches to divine, or that predominates over every other, it is a tender commisseration administered to those under deep affliction, or when the mind is under some melancholy influence.'

'The health and spirits of Romney'—comments Hayley—'were at this time so impaired, that he required indeed the most soothing attention of friendship. Like many other sufferers from that depressive disorder, hypochondria, he laboured under a frequent dread, that his talents would utterly desert him.'

In a second letter, Romney wrote:—'In all probability, if my health be not equally good, I shall leave off business, and go abroad, but it will be a year or more, before I can settle my future plans.' He added that, for his next Shakespearean subject, he has fixed upon 'Joan la Pucelle making her incantation, and another I intend from her appearance on the walls of Rouen, with a torch in her hand.'

A little later, however, his spirits were greatly raised by an unexpected visit from the fair Emma, who came early one morning to sit to him, in a Turkish costume. She had just arrived in England for the purpose of marrying Sir William, who accompanied her to the studio. 'Romney had ever treated her with the tenderness of a father,' writes Hayley, 'which she acknowledged on this occasion, with tears of lively gratitude, in announcing to him her splendid prospect of being soon married to Sir William, and of attending him to the

Court of Naples. Romney had conceived such very high ideas of the beauty, the talents and the heart of this lady, that I believe the joy of a father, in the brilliant marriage of a favorite daughter, could hardly have exceeded that of my friend on this occasion.' Sir William and the lady who was so soon to become his wife, were received with open arms by Society. They were fêted and entertained by the Marquis of Abercorn, by Mr. Beckford at Fonthill, and by the Duke of Queensberry, who gave a brilliant concert in the lady's honour at Richmond, where Emma herself performed. The Prince of Wales was very anxious to have her portrait, and gave Romney a commission for two. She was most desirous that the painter should not think that her regard for him had lessened. In spite of the whirl of social engagements in which she and Sir William were involved, he was bidden to dine with them, and they, in their turn, dined three times at Cavendish Square during July and August.

Lady Russell, in her *Three Generations of Fascinating Women*, published in 1904, says:—'Sir William Hamilton was a great friend of Lady Ailesbury's family; and after he made the beautiful Emma Hart his wife he brought her to see the Conways, whom she delighted with her "Attitudes." Lady Ailesbury remembers that, though Lady Hamilton had such consummate art in the management of her draperies on these occasions, her taste in ordinary dress was atrocious. One night she was in a box in Drury Lane, near Lady Ailesbury, who noticed her rapt gaze at the actress, Mrs. Powell, as she came on the stage. It was afterwards explained to Lady Ailesbury that Mrs. Powell had been under-housemaid in Dr. Budd's house at Chatham Place, Blackfriars, at the same time that Emma Hart had been nursery-maid there.'

Her unexpected presence thoroughly aroused Romney's flagging energies, and inspired him to paint at his best. On the 19th of June, he wrote to Hayley that 'at present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you, before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life:—I told her you had begun it:—then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being my model. So you see I must be in London till the time, when she leaves town.'

In a second letter, dated July 7th, he continues in the same strain:—'I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William, for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as every thing is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her, and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense, than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures, I have begun, are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery. The weather has been so very hot, and my health so indifferent, that it has rendered me almost unable to write.'

According to Hayley, his intended picture of Constance was never begun, 'but his Joan of Arc had a countenance of most powerful expression. The head was thought one of the finest, that he ever painted from the features of his favourite model.' The poet could not resist a sonnet in praise of this picture, excusing himself by confessing that he composed the lines 'in a zealous wish to support and encourage the apprehensive spirits of my friend. It was a maxim with him that every modest and diffident artist ought to have almost a daily portion of chearing applause. He considered honest and temperate praise as the vital aliment of genius. I never knew any mortal more feelingly alive to the influence both of commendation and of censure; of esteem, or of neglect. Even a shadow of coldness in the deportment of a person, from whom he expected great cordiality of regard, could almost paralyse his powers as a painter.'

He proceeds to give an instance of this, which happened only a month after Romney's last enthusiastic letter. The artist went to dine with the Hamiltons. A number of fashionable people were present, and his divinity sang and acted afterwards. 'She performed, both in the serious and comic, to admiration, both in singing and acting; but her Nina surpasses every thing I ever saw, and I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it,' he told his friend. 'The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible, and pathetic. My mind was so much heated, that I was for running down to Eartham to fetch you up to see her. But alas! soon after, I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A coldness and neglect seemed to have taken place of her repeated declarations of regard for me. They left town to make

THE COUNTESS OF CLANRICARDE

IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR HUGH P. LANE

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MISS RAMUS

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many visits in the country. I expect them again the latter end of this week, when my anxiety (for I have suffered very much) will be either relieved, or increased, as I find her conduct. It is highly probable, that none of the pictures will be finished, except I find her more friendly, than she appeared the last time I saw her. . . . You will see every thing is in great uncertainty, but it may turn out better than I expect.'

Hayley, whose belief in verses for the cure of all ills was ineradicable, hastily dashed off a couple of them, beginning—

> 'Gracious Cassandra! whose benign esteem,
> To my weak talent every aid supplied';

which he begged Romney to transcribe and present to the lady as though they were an effort of his own muse. Their softening effect, he thought, would prove instantaneous.

The Hayleyan lines, however, were not wanted. Romney wrote to Eartham on August 29th, that 'Cassandra came to town the 16th, and I did not see her till the 20th, so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered; she appointed to sit on the 23rd, and has been sitting almost every day since; and means to sit once or twice a day, till she leaves London, which will be about Wednesday or Thursday, in the next week. When she arrived to sit, she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I began a picture of her, as a present for her mother. I was very successful with it; for it is thought the most beautiful head, I have painted of her yet. Now indeed, I think, she is as cordial with me as ever; and she laments very much, that she is to leave England without seeing you. I take it excessively kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really my mind had suffered so very much, that my health was much affected, and I was afraid, I should not have had power to have painted any more from her; but since she has resumed her former kindness, my health and spirits are quite recovered. She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility with most astonishing powers; she is the talk of the whole town, and really surpasses every thing both in singing and acting, that ever appeared. Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a year, and two benefits, if she would engage with him, on which Sir William said pleasantly, that he had engaged her for life.'

Romney was not the only artist who was anxious to paint the

portrait of a lady so greatly sought after by the social world, and of such celebrated beauty. From a letter quoted by Mr. G. S. Layard in his *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag* (1906), it is evident that Lawrence desired to depict her upon an important canvas; but the lady had so many engagements that she could only spare him an hour or two, and the irritation this caused him was possibly responsible for his contemptuous reference to Romney's portraits of her. It is the draft of a letter to an unknown correspondent, and runs:—

'Dear Sir,—Lady Hamilton has left her best portrait with you. I found her in town, too much engaged to give me the time I wished for and was necessary, but I must put it down to a good motive, viz., the gratitude to Mr. Romney, whose portraits of her are feeble,—more shew the artist's feebleness than *her* grandeur. This assertion to one who has been accustomed to hear me speak my mind I trust will not appear impudent.—Your obliged friend, Tho. Lawrence.'

Mr. Layard dates this letter May 1796, but this cannot be correct, as Lady Hamilton was not in England between 1791 and 1800. It was evidently written in the former year, at about the time when Lawrence made the beautiful sketch of her inscribed 'Emma, 1791,'—an oval, in which she is shown in profile, looking up, her hair covered with a turban,—which is in the British Museum.

The marriage took place on September 6th, at Marylebone Church, and was announced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as follows:—'Sir William Hamilton, K.B., envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Naples, to Miss Hart, a lady much celebrated for her elegant accomplishments and great musical abilities.' The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Dr. Edward Barry, rector of Elsdon, Northumberland, and the witnesses were Lord Abercorn, and the Rev. Louis Dutens, secretary to the English Minister at Turin, with whom Emma long maintained a faithful friendship. It is to him she refers in the letter to Romney, part of which is quoted below:—'As you was so good to say you would give me the little picture with the black hat, I wish you would unfrill (?) it and give it to Mr. Duten. I have a great regard for him. He took a deal of pains and trouble for me; and I could not do him a greater favour than to give him my picture. Do, my dear friend, do me that pleasure; and if there is anything from Naples, command me.'

The last portrait Romney painted of her is said to be the one now

known as 'The Ambassadress,' in which she is wearing a white dress with a blue sash, and one of those large blue velvet hats which were her favourites, such as Greville used to forward to Naples, in meek obedience to her behests, after she had become his aunt. The story runs that she gave him the final sitting for this in her wedding dress, immediately after her return from church, and at the conclusion of it, the painter and his 'divine lady' took a tender farewell of one another. This portrait, which has a view of Vesuvius in the background, is now in the possession of Sir R. Harvey, of Langley Park, Slough.

The newly-wedded pair started almost immediately for Naples, Queen Charlotte remaining obdurate to the last, and refusing to receive the bride. The memory of this rebuff was almost obliterated in Paris, where they remained some days, and received much kindness at the hands of Marie-Antoinette, sister of the queen who was to become Lady Hamilton's bosom friend.

Before the end of the year, Romney received the following letter from the lady, dated Caserta, December 26th, 1791:—

'I have been received with open arms by all the Neapolitans of both sexes, by all the foreigners of every distinction. I have been presented to the Queen of Naples by her own desire, she has shewn me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions; in short, I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope he will have no corse to repent of what he as done, for I feel so gratefull to him that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this? You know me enugh. You was the first dear friend I open'd my heart to; you ought to know me. You have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days, you have known me in my poverty and prosperity, and I had no occasion to have liv'd *for years* in poverty and distress, if I had not felt something of virtue in my mind. Oh, my dear Friend, for a time, I own through distress my virtue was vanquish'd, but my sense of virtue was not overcome. How gratefull then do I feel to my dear, dear husband that as restored peace to my mind, that as given me honoer, rank, and what is more, innocence and happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear Sir, my friend, my more than father; believe me, I am still that same Emma you knew me. If I could forget for a moment what I was, I ought to suffer. Command me in anything I can do for you here; believe me I shall have a real pleasure. Come to Naples, and I will be your model, anything to induce you to come, that

I may have an opportunity to shew my gratitude to you. . . . Tell Hayly I am allways reading his *Triumphs of Temper*; it was *that* made me Lady H., for God knows I had for 5 years enugh to try my temper, and I am affraid if it had not been for the good example Serena tought me, my girdle wou'd have burst, and if it had I had been undone; for Sir W. more minds temper than beauty. He therefore wishes Mr. Hayly wou'd come, that he might thank him for his sweet-tempered wife. I swear to you I have never been once out of humour since the 6th of last September. God bless you.—

'Yours, E. HAMILTON.'

The passage in this letter—'You have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days, you have known me in my poverty and prosperity'—has been taken by some writers as a proof that Romney knew Emma before Greville brought her to his studio, and that the story that he drew from her when she was with Dr. Graham is a true one; but it seems sufficiently explained by the difference in her worldly condition in the spring of 1782, and in the autumn of 1791. The days of the little house in Edgeware Row were poor ones when compared with those of the Residency in Naples, which she occupied as the honoured wife of the English Minister Plenipotentiary; and it must be remembered that Greville's excuse for deserting her and for flinging her into the arms of his uncle, was the plea of poverty. This is quite enough to account for her words in writing of her new happiness to her old friend.

Romney's reply, included in the Morrison MSS., runs as follows:—

'My DEAR LADY,—What must you thinke of my neglect of answering your kind letter? Do not accuse me of ingratitud. I wish I could express myself as I felt at the perusal of it, to find your happyness so compleat. May God grant it may remane so till the end of your days. You may be assured that I have the same anxiety that Sir William and yourself should continue to think well of me, and the same desire to do everything in my power that may merit your esteem. I have waited till I could give you some account of the picter of *Cassandra*, and some other of the pictures you were so kind to sit to me for. The *Cassandra* is at last gone to the Shakespeare Gallery—it suits. The King and Royal Family saw it. I have never heard from the Prince of Wales, till a few days ago Mr. West called, and said the Prince desired him to look at the

picture for his Royal Hiness. They are near finished. The lively one I have made to suit Calipso. I am anxious to know what you wish me to do with the picture with a Bonnet, as you have not mentioned it in your letter. Mr. Crawfurd has expressed a great desire of possessing it in prefference to the other. I shall wait for your instructions. I sent as your ladyship required the picter in Black to du Ton. I was led into a thing that has given me some uneasyness, I was solicited so very strongly for a letter of recommendation to your Ladyship that I was not able to get off. The person was then in Italy, but was not informed who he was. I hope your Ladyship will forgive me for taking such a liberty, and that nothing unpleasant happened.'

Immediately after the Hamiltons had left London for Naples, Romney hastened to Eartham, but he had worked so hard at the fair lady's pictures that he was completely exhausted, and could do nothing but rest and recuperate in the Sussex air. He was back in town before the end of October, and wrote to his host that he hoped 'in a few days to be able to bring my mind into the old trammels of drudgery, though it appears horrible to me to take up the trifling part of my profession.'

No doubt, at first, his studio seemed but a dreary place now that it was no longer enlivened by the constant presence of Emma, and that the inspiration upon which he had for a second time grown to depend was finally removed. Something of what he felt about her is to be gathered at second hand from a letter of Hayley's addressed to her eighteen months after Romney's death, dated May 17th, 1804, in which he says:—

'You were not only his *model* but his *inspirer*, and he truly and gratefully said, that he owed a great part of his felicity as a painter to the *angelic kindness and intelligence* with which you used to animate his diffident and tremulous spirits to the grandest efforts of art.'

Soon after this Hayley begged him to return to Eartham, to meet Madame de Genlis, who was to stay there on her way to Bath. He was too busy to go, however: 'I am now set in for study. I have made a large composition from Milton, and I wish to keep my mind fixt to that work as much as possible. I hope you will have influence enough to persuade Madame de Genlis to pass through London in her return, and then I shall have time I hope to do something worthy of notice from her and Pamela.' The lady, however, played the poet

false, and went straight to Bath—so that the artist lost nothing by his determination to resist the temptation.

Among the portraits he painted in 1791 were Mrs. St. George[1] and child, and Mrs. Morton Pitt and child, while about this time he completed the 'Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy,' which was sold to Mr. Newbery for 165 guineas; the 'Dancing Bacchante,' sold to Mr. Christian Curwen; and 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions.'

There are two, if not three, versions of 'The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy' in existence, and several sketches and studies for it at Liverpool and Cambridge. The one illustrated here belongs to Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne, of Cranbury Park, Southampton, and a second, illustrated in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, is in the possession of Lord Leconfield at Petworth. This picture was engraved in stipple by Benjamin Smith in 1803, and again in stipple by Caroline Watson in 1809, of a smaller size, for Hayley's *Life*. Mr. T. Chamberlayne's version was exhibited at the Romney Exhibition in 1900, No. 61, and in the same exhibition a 'Sketch for the Head of Comedy,' No. 87, was lent by Miss B. Courteney. In a note in the catalogue it stated that the latter was 'Bequeathed to Philip Courteney, Q.C., (the father of the present owner) by the painter,' and Miss Courteney adds:—'My father told me he believed that the model who sat for this head was "Nance Carey," the mother of Edmund Kean.' The 'Comedy' has been always looked upon as a portrait of Lady Hamilton, to whom it bears considerable resemblance, but the above statement may be possibly correct. John Romney, in his life of his father, does not mention Lady Hamilton in this connection. The Infant Shakespeare was painted from the child of a guardsman.[2] (See Plate XVII.)

The 'Infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions' is also in the possession of Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne. As already stated, it was given by Romney to the Boydells. It was engraved by Benjamin Smith, and exhibited in the Shakespeare Gallery, and was published as a separate plate in 1797. It is thus described in the Boydells' Catalogue:—

'Nature is represented with her face unveiled to her favourite Child, who is placed between Joy and Sorrow.—On the Right-Hand of Nature are Love, Hatred, and Jealousy; on her Left-Hand, Anger, Envy, and Fear.' A small reproduction of it is given in George

[1] Afterwards Mrs. Richard Trench.

[2] See page 268.

Paston's *Life* of the artist. It fetched only £65 2s. 0d. at the Boydells' sale, to John Romney's great disgust, as he considered it to be one of his father's most perfect works, and equal to the best of Correggio's pictures. There is a small, carefully-finished study for this picture in the Shakespeare Memorial, Stratford-on-Avon, No. 39, on a panel, about 24 inches by 18 inches, which was presented by Mr. Henry Graves. The heads are said to be portraits of well-known people, such as Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Siddons, and Kemble.

In November of this year he painted Hayley's son Tom at the age of eleven, as 'Robin Goodfellow,' flying on a cloud, crowned with a chaplet of the flower which Oberon had commissioned him to find. Tom wrote to Mrs. Hayley in the following February to tell her that 'We are much diverted with the observation of the lady who took the clouds in the picture for a muff. The fairy is represented as flying triumphantly through the air, having executed the commission of his king Oberon to fetch

'a little western flower,
Before milk white, now purple with Love's wound.'

Our dear painter was in doubt, when he left London, whether he should introduce this purple flower in the hand, or tied as a garland round the head of the flying fairy. Perhaps he forgot to introduce it.'

John Romney gives the date of this picture as 1789, but this is wrong, for Hayley himself went to London to meet his son on his return from a visit to Derbyshire, when the portrait was painted, and gives the date in his memoirs of the boy.[1]

On December 30th, Dr. Potter, the Greek scholar, wrote from Suffolk urging Romney to finish and send to him the portrait of his son, who was so ill that he was not expected to live long. Twelve months later, on December 17th, 1792, Dr. Potter wrote again from 'Lowestot,' acknowledging a letter of Romney's, and expressing his pleasure that he is soon to receive his son's portrait. The youth, however, had died in the previous February.

At the beginning of 1792 Romney was in better health. Madame de Genlis was in London, and he was delighted to have an opportunity of returning to her and to Pamela some little of the kindness he had received from them in Paris. He went with them to the play on

[1] This picture was bequeathed by Hayley to Captain Godfrey, or bought in by him at Hayley's sale in 1821. His grandson sold it, with three other works by Romney, at Christie's, on May 12th, 1838, when it was purchased by Mr. M. Colnaghi for £105. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1877, No. 212. It is 29 inches by 24 inches.

more than one occasion. Hayley was too ill to come up to town, so Romney wrote to tell him, on January 28th,—'I am painting two pictures of Pamela, and I think they will be both beautiful. As they are two different views of her face, one of course will be better than the other, and I shall give Madame de Genlis her choice of them.'

These portraits shared the fate of so many of Romney's pictures. In spite of his good intentions they were never even half finished, and the one he began of the elder lady remained a mere sketch. Towards the end of his life he gave it to Hayley, who had it engraved by Caroline Watson for his *Life*. (See Plate XVIII.)

Of the portraits of Pamela, the better known one, which is reproduced in Sir Herbert Maxwell's book, is in the possession of Mrs. H. L. Bischoffsheim. This is the one which, according to John Romney, the painter gave to Hayley, the other being bought many years afterwards by Lord Dunlo (the Earl of Clancarty) for Lady Conolly. The second, now belonging to Sir G. Campbell, of Thames Ditton, one of her descendants, forms the frontispiece to *Edward and Pamela Fitzgerald* by Gerald Campbell, published in 1904. It is an oval, showing the head and shoulders. She is looking up, her head turned to the spectator's right, and wears a white dress cut low at the neck, and a scarf round her hair, which is unpowdered, and curls on her forehead and neck. It is of much the same style as several of Romney's unfinished studies of Lady Hamilton. The background is dark. There is another portrait of Pamela with her two children which is wrongly ascribed to Romney.

Romney wrote to his son, on February 4th, that he had preserved his health by 'using a flesh-brush, dipt in salt water, and brushing myself all over every morning, and after that rubbing myself with a rough towel, which has contributed much to my health and spirits.' He gives an account of all his doings, from which it is to be gathered that he was far from being the recluse some writers have suggested, for among other things, he says:—'I have dined out often, and had people at dinner.' After speaking of the pictures of Lady Hamilton he has been working on, he adds:—'I have made, and am making designs from Milton; and mean to make several before I begin to paint them, but it is quite a *secret*.'

About this time he was much occupied with these designs from Milton, and, according to Hayley, persuaded the latter to write a life of the poet to be prefixed to a folio edition of Milton's works which Boydell and Nicoll proposed to publish. To oblige his 'beloved

associate' Hayley virtuously abandoned a projected visit to Flaxman in Rome. 'Romney imagined that his friend's compliance with their very earnest desire, would induce them, as the pay masters of the Shakespeare Gallery, to behave to him with the greater kindness and liberality, concerning the many important pictures, that he himself had thoughts of executing for the adventurous proprietors of that splendid undertaking. The heart of Hayley was so truly interested in the professional glory of the admirable painter, whose apprehensive spirit he comforted and cheered for many years, that Romney's anxious wish, and his own inclination to vindicate Milton from the malignant asperity of his biographer, Johnson,' induced him to give up Italy and take up this fresh work in its place, for which, no doubt, Romney was already projecting a number of grand designs.

At this time he was also busily engaged in his spare moments in making a number of slight studies for a picture of 'The Banquet Scene' from *Macbeth*, which he was anxious to paint for the Shakespeare Gallery, but through some feeling that the Boydells were not very enthusiastic about it, he eventually abandoned it.

In the spring of this year (1792), Hayley made the personal acquaintance of William Cowper. The poet of Weston was then hard at work translating Milton's Latin and Italian poems, which were to be published with illustrations by Fuseli. The bard of Eartham was at the same time busily engaged upon the *Life of Milton*, already mentioned, for Boydell's forthcoming sumptuous edition of the poet's works. It was hinted in the newspapers that the two writers were rivals. On hearing these rumours Hayley dashed off the inevitable sonnet to Cowper, with a letter assuring him of his ignorance of the latter's undertaking. Other friendly letters followed on both sides. Writing on April 6th, Cowper says:—'God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed they are apt soon to terminate! But as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart towards you that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself, I trust, in the event, a propitious omen.'

Hayley paid his first visit to Weston in the middle of May. While there, Cowper's aged friend, Mrs. Unwin, with whom he resided, was seized with a severe paralytic stroke, and the visitor made himself useful both in cheering his new friend's spirits, and in suggesting remedies, such as electricity, for the invalid.

The return visit was made to Eartham in August. Cowper regarded it as 'a tremendous exploit.' For more than twenty-six years he had hardly moved from the neighbourhood of Olney and Weston. 'Once,' he says, writing to Newton, 'I have been on the point of determining not to go, and even since we fixed the day; my troubles have been so insupportable. But it has been made a matter of much prayer, and at last it has pleased God to satisfy me, in some measure, that His will corresponds with our purpose, and that He will afford us His protection.'

On the eve of departure he wrote to Hayley in a similar strain:— 'Could you have any conception of the fears I have had to bustle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens, that as the day approaches my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you. . . . I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has however opened my passage at last. . . . The terrors that I have spoken of would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well that, to whatever cause it be owing, (whether to constitution, or to God's express appointment), I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I cannot help it. . . . So much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham.'

The travellers set forth on the first of the month—Cowper, Mrs. Unwin, John Johnson, his young cousin, whom he called his Johnny of Norfolk, his man Sam, and his dog Beau—and their journey was made easier for them by such kind friends as Samuel Rose, General Cowper, and Thomas Carwardine, who met them at various points on the route, so that by the third evening they were all safe and sound at their destination.

In the Sussex air Mrs. Unwin grew better and was able to walk a little, and whenever she grew weary she rode in a little chaise which was drawn about the lanes by Sockett and Tom Hayley, and pushed from behind by Cowper or Johnson. Young Thomas Sockett had been brought back from Weston Underwood by Hayley. He was the

MISS BENEDETTA RAMUS

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE HON. W. F. D. SMITH, M.P.

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LADY AUGUSTA MURRAY

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. CHARLES J. WERTHEIMER

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son of one of those obscure village geniuses, whose inventions bring them no profit, from whom Hayley had borrowed the electrical machine for the alleviation of Mrs. Unwin. Cowper had interested himself in the son, who had first attracted his notice by investing his pocket-money in a Latin grammar. He was anxious to find employment, and on Cowper's advice, Hayley engaged him as a companion and teacher to his boy Tom.

The host was naturally anxious that his new and his old friend should meet under his roof, and suggested that the artist might combine business and pleasure by painting the portrait of one of his neighbours, Sir Richard Hotham, the 'Knight of Bognor,' during the visit, but Romney remained firm in his resolution to refrain from commissions of such a nature during his annual holiday, though afterwards he painted a full-length of the 'commercial knight' in London.

He wrote in reply on the sixth of the month saying that he hoped to come down in a few days' time. 'I certainly do not visit you with an intention to play, but to study. . . . I have been very deep in study for some time past. I have gone every morning to Kilburn to breakfast, which contributed much to my health, and to the production of a great many of my best studies.'

No sooner did the two men meet than Romney felt greatly attracted by Cowper's character, and took real pleasure in his society. He was eager to take the poet's portrait, which he did in coloured crayons, a mode of painting, according to his host, in which he had little experience, 'but he possessed that happy versatility of talent, which gave him an appearance of having been long familiar with any process of art, that he had an inclination to try. He worked with uncommon diligence, zeal, and success, producing a resemblance so powerful, that spectators who contemplated the portrait with the original by its side, thought it hardly possible for any similitude to be more striking, or more exact. Romney wished to express what he often saw in studying the features of Cowper,

"The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling."

And I think he expressed it without overstepping the modesty of truth and nature, but some persons, and ladies in particular, more conversant with the colloquial, than with the poetic countenance of Cowper, have supposed Romney's portrait of him to border on extravagance of expression.' (See Plate XIX.)

Cowper himself thought the portrait to be a good one, and saw nothing of the 'air of wildness in it expressive of a disordered mind, which the shock produced by the paralytic attack of Mrs. Unwin was rapidly impressing on his countenance.' In comparing it with his portrait by Lemuel Abbott, painted only a month earlier, he says:—'Romney has succeeded well in drawing my head only, but my head in a different aspect, little more than a profile'; and in a letter to Lady Hesketh from Eartham, dated August 26th, 1792, he says of it:—'Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all here with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible.'

It is almost entirely in red and black crayon, with touches of brown. The coat is only indicated with hasty strokes, but the face is carefully worked up, and the complexion of a ruddy colour. It is a strong and powerful likeness, but there is undoubtedly a startled expression about the eyes. Cowper is wearing the cap he was accustomed to use in a morning, which was presented to him by Lady Hesketh. He has immortalised this gift in his lines entitled 'Gratitude'—

> 'This cap, that so stately appears,
> With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
> Which seems by the crest that it rears,
> Ambitious of brushing the sky;
> This cap to my cousin I owe,
> She gave it, and gave me beside,
> Wreathed into an elegant bow,
> The ribbon with which it is tied.'

The portrait remained in Hayley's possession until his death, and was by him bequeathed to the poet's cousin, the Rev. Dr. John Johnson, who edited Hayley's own *Memoirs*. It remained in the possession of the Johnson family until 1906, when it was presented to the National Portrait Gallery by Mrs. H. R. Vaughan Johnson. In 1801 William Blake made a miniature copy of it for Hayley, and engraved it for the first volume of Hayley's *Life of Cowper*, the quarto edition published in 1803;[1] and it was also engraved by Caroline Watson for the octavo edition of 1806. It was exhibited at

[1] Hayley, writing to Romney on 3rd February, 1801, tells his friend that 'I have taught him (Blake), he says, to paint in miniature, and in truth he has made a very creditable copy from your admirable portrait of the dear departed bard, from which he will also make an engraving.' Romney had great admiration for Blake's powers of design, as may be gathered from a letter from Flaxman to Hayley, written about 1784, in which he says, 'I have before mentioned that Mr. Romney thinks his historical drawings rank with those of Michael Angelo.'

South Kensington in 1868, (No. 777), by Mr. H. R. Vaughan Johnson.

There is a second portrait of Cowper by Romney in the National Portrait Gallery: a small oil painting, which was purchased by Messrs. Agnew and Sons at Miss Romney's sale in 1894. No history is attached to this picture. 'It had been for years,' writes Mr. Lawrence Romney, 'in one of the attics at Whitestock Hall, and was covered with house-dirt, and part of the paint had peeled off. When looking over the sketches and other pictures in preparation for the 1894 sale, I thought it might well be meant for a portrait of Cowper, but as I was not certain, I had it catalogued merely as "A Head (possibly Cowper)." Sir George Scharf saw it and liked it, and tried to persuade his Trustees to buy it, but they would not, and so he purchased it himself from Messrs. Agnew, had it done up, and presented it to the National Portrait Gallery. He told me this himself, and Mr. Lionel Cust has since informed me that Sir George examined a great number of portraits of Cowper, and came to the conclusion that this was an undoubted likeness of the poet.' It is stated in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, in which it is reproduced, that it was painted at Eartham in 1792, but no evidence is brought forward in proof of this.

Three portraits of Cowper were included in the Guelph Exhibition, 1891, two by Lemuel F. Abbott, and one attributed to Romney. The larger of the two by Abbott, No. 353, was lent by the Rev. W. Cowper Johnson, a descendant of the poet's cousin. It is the one which was painted at Weston a few weeks before Cowper's visit to Eartham, of which he wrote to Hayley in July, 1792:—Well, this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance. Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it, wagging his tail as he went, and evidently showing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is half-length, as it is technically but absurdly called: that is to say, it gives all but foot and ankle.' He also sent the following doggerel lines about it to Hayley:—

'Abbott is painting me so true
That (trust me) you would stare
And hardly know, at the first view,
If I was here or there.'

Cowper also wrote to his friend Mr. Bull in the same strain:—'How

do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days? In sitting, —not on cockatrices' eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humour, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would therefore bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days, and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over.'

The poet is represented seated at a desk, in the dress of the Throckmorton Archery Club, a green coat and buff waistcoat and breeches, of which he says in one of his letters:—'Green and buff are colours in which I am oftener seen than in any others, and are become almost as natural to me as to a parrot, and the dress was chosen principally for that reason.'

His cousin and others thought this portrait to be a better likeness than either Romney's or the sketch made by Lawrence in the following year.

The smaller portrait exhibited at the Guelph Exhibition and attributed to Abbott, No. 302, lent by Mr. G. P. Boyce, in which the poet is wearing a black cloak, grey waistcoat, and black cap, is probably, according to Mr. Thomas Wright, the well-known biographer of Cowper, a spurious one. The third example No. 220, a half-length, in a black coat and red cap, lent by Mr. Percival Boxall, had the following note attached to it in the catalogue:—'This picture was presented by Romney to his friend William Hayley, of Felpham, Sussex, and was brought from thence with the portrait of Anna Seward (see No. 231).' Romney had nothing to do with this portrait, and as Mr. W. Roberts points out in an interesting contribution on the Portraits of Cowper to the *Athenæum* for February 17th, 1900, an absolutely false history is attached to it. The only portrait of the poet by Romney possessed by Hayley, was the one now in the National Portrait Gallery.

Mr. Roberts, however, has himself fallen into error, for he speaks of the genuine portrait by Abbott, No. 353, as attributed to Romney, and says that it 'has no claim to have inspired Cowper's sonnet to Romney': whereas the catalogue gives it to its rightful author, and only claims for it—quoting from Hayley's *Life and Posthumous Writings of William Cowper*, vol. ii. pp. 63, 64,—that it inspired the doggerel lines quoted above.

During Cowper's visit to Eartham the two poets not only worked

at Homer, but revised and corrected all Cowper's translations from the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton. Each day after dinner they amused themselves by making a rapid metrical translation of Andreini's 'Adamo,' the poem which suggested to Milton the design for 'Paradise Lost.' This was afterwards included among Cowper's works as 'Adam, a drama.'

Another visitor at Eartham this year was Mrs. Charlotte Smith, the novelist, who came over from Brighton, on purpose to meet Cowper. During her stay she was busily at work on her novel, *The Old Manor House*. This lady was a ready and rapid, if indifferent, writer. 'The exquisite faculties of the unhappy Charlotte,' her host tells us, 'were naturally quick; and perhaps their natural quickness was heightened by a laudable ambition of shining before such a judge of talents as Cowper, who possessed in the highest degree, both acuteness and candour. It was a recreation, peculiarly sweet after a busy morning, to hear the novelist read the new pages of her work; for she read, as she wrote, with simplicity and grace. Romney, who had long admired her genius, and pitied her troubles, was delighted to find her still capable of such mental activity under such a load of misfortunes, and testified his esteem for her writings by executing a portrait of the authoress. This he drew also in coloured crayons. It has a plaintive air and it is certainly an expressive likeness, but it was unavoidably a work of haste, and therefore, as a production of art, it is by no means equal to his more studied portrait of Cowper. Romney himself considered his portrait of Cowper as the nearest approach that he had ever made to a perfect representation of life and character.'

Miss Seward, however, had a less exalted opinion of Mrs. Smith's talents, and always wrote scornfully of her claims to be regarded as a poetess. 'I forget,' she says in a letter to Theophilus Swift, dated July 9th, 1789, 'if ever I spoke to you about Mrs. C. Smith's everlasting lamentables, which she calls sonnets, made up of hackneyed scraps of dismality with which her memory furnished her from our various poets. Never were poetical whipt syllabubs, in black glasses, so eagerly swallowed by the odd taste of the public.'

During this visit, Guy, the Chichester surgeon, was often at Eartham, and Cowper was greatly attracted by him. He also had the pleasure of meeting for the first time in the flesh his correspondent, the Rev. James Hurdis, who dabbled in poetry, in which, to the best of his ability, he imitated the greater man, for whose work he had the highest admiration. His 'Village Curate,' once popular, is now completely

forgotten. 'He is gentle in manner,' Cowper told Lady Hesketh, 'and delicate in his person, resembling our poor friend Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have ever seen.'

Hayley, although he kept the portrait of Cowper, presented him in exchange with his own 'picture drawn by Romney about fifteen years ago, an admirable likeness,' as the recipient informed Lady Hesketh. The donor delayed to despatch it to Weston for so long that Cowper began to think it was never coming. 'I began to be restless about your portrait,' he wrote, 'and to say, How long shall I have to wait for it? I wished it here for many reasons: the sight of it will be a comfort to me, for I not only love but am proud of you, as of a conquest made in my old age. Johnny goes to town on Monday, on purpose to call on Romney, to whom he shall give all proper information concerning its conveyance hither.'

It arrived at last, on January 20th, 1793. 'Had you come, and come without notice, too,' Cowper wrote in acknowledgment, 'you would not have surprised us more, than (as the matter was managed) we were surprised at the arrival of your picture. It reached us in the evening, after the shutters were closed, at a time when a chaise might actually have brought you without giving us the least previous intimation. Then it was, that Samuel, with his cheerful countenance, appeared at the study door, and with a voice as cheerful as his looks, exclaimed, "Mr. Hayley is come, Madam!" We both started, and in the same moment cried, "Mr. Hayley come! And where is he?" The next moment corrected our mistake, and, finding Mary's voice grow suddenly tremulous I turned and saw her weeping.' This portrait of Hayley is thought by Lord Ronald Gower to be the one reproduced in his book; it belongs to Professor Waldstein.

Cowper was anxious to make some return to Romney for his own likeness, and made more than one attempt while at Eartham to put his feelings into verse, but found such writing impossible away from Weston. Even after returning home the task still remained a difficult one. On October 13th, he wrote to Hayley:—'The name of a man whom I esteem as I do Romney ought not to be unmusical in my ears; but his name will be so till I have paid him a debt justly due to him, by doing such poetical honours to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the muse is still obdurate and coy as ever.'

He satisfied himself at last, however, and on November 28th, he

sent the result to Hayley with a letter, asking him to forward it to the painter. 'I must premise,' he told him, 'that I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why I said to myself, "It shall not be a sonnet"; accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, and then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so.'

It is the only contemporary effort worthy of the name of poetry which Romney's art inspired, standing out with distinction amid the great mass of Hayley's commonplace and trivial verse. It runs as follows:—

'TO GEORGE ROMNEY Esq.

'On his picture of me in crayons, drawn at Eartham, in the sixty-first year of my age, and in the months of August and September, 1792.

'Romney, expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvas, not the form alone
And semblance, but however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face;

With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so pencilled mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

But this I mark,—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
—Well; I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?'

On the same date, November 28th, Cowper wrote himself to the artist:—'Since I left Eartham nothing has occurred that has given me so much pleasure as the arrival of your fine picture of our most amiable friend Hayley; and your kindness in sending me what the box contained beside, gratifies me in the highest degree, convincing me that I am not forgotten by one whom I shall always remember with affection. All arrived safe, and for all I thank you. My young cousin has told me by letter how kindly you behaved to him when he called on you. For this I thank you likewise, for I love him and have great reason to do so. It

was a very sensible mortification to me that I could not have the pleasure of seeing you at your own house in my way through London; but the danger of offending others whom I should have been obliged to pass unvisited, deterred me. The happy day I hope will come when you will make me amends for what I lost for that severe necessity, by giving us your company at Weston. Happy indeed should I be to see you here, and the hope of it, which you gave me encouragement to entertain, is too pleasant to be slightly parted with. Hayley will be called to London sometime in the course of the coming year, and a chaise will bring you easily in seven hours. A little relaxation will be good for you, and your enjoying it here will be equally good for me. . . . Adieu, God bless you! Believe me, affectionately yours,

'Wm. Cowper.'

It was to this visit to Eartham that Romney's picture of 'Milton and his two Daughters' owed its origin. Both poets were deep in the study of Milton's poems, and Romney, who had already been planning subjects from them, found his enthusiasm rekindled in theirs. This acquaintance with Cowper also inspired a subject from *The Task*. 'He painted about this time,' (1793), says John Romney, 'also the *Death of Ophelia*, and *Susan*, from the ballad "When the Seas were roaring"; neither of which was in a finished state.' This last was probably a version of the picture known to-day as 'Lady Hamilton as Ariadne,' in which she is represented seated in a cave by the sea, in a despondent attitude, with hands pressed together on her lap, and eyes cast down, and wearing a plain straw hat and simple white dress —the picture now belonging to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Audley Neeld, Bart., M.P. It was probably suggested by the extract from Cowper's poem, beginning:—

'A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died;
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers.'

It was engraved in line by C. Brome and T. Bragg, and is known in two states, the first unfinished, with no inscription, but scratched 'Painted by G. Romney. Engraved by C. Brome,' and the other, which was published in 1827, with the title 'Kate,' in open letters, which was the name of Cowper's heroine, and a verse from the poem underneath it. This picture may be the one which realised twenty-

nine guineas at the Romney sale in 1807, when it was called 'The Dying Damsel' in the ballad 'Twas when the Seas were Roaring.'[1] More than one version of it exists, one of them being in the collection of Mr. W. A. Coats, of Glasgow. Romney probably painted it from some study of Lady Hamilton. Several unfinished canvases, called 'Absence' and 'Solitude,' which were included in the 1807 sale, appear to have been studies or variations of this picture.

A letter which Romney wrote to his son on his return to town, gives so good an idea of the daily life at Eartham that a part of it may be quoted here:—

'I have not been able till very lately to say much in favour of my health; but, thank God, I am now well recovered from a very unhealthy and uncomfortable summer. I was near a month at Mr. Hayley's, where I met Mr. Cowper, and Mrs. Smith; and yet in spite of such good company, and bathing, my health continued very poorly. Mr. Cowper is a most excellent man; he has translated Milton's Latin Poems, and I suppose very well. Hayley is writing the life of Milton, so you may imagine that we were deep in that poet; every thing belonging to him was collected together, and some part of his works read every day. Mrs. Smith is writing another Novel, which, as far as it is advanced, is, I think, very good. She began it while I was there, and finished one volume. She wrote a chapter every day, which was read at night, without requiring any correcting. I think her a woman of astonishing powers. She has two daughters grown to womanhood, a son in the East Indies, and another at Winchester school; and she supports them almost wholly by her writing. She and the two poets were employed every morning from eight o'clock till twelve in writing, when they had a luncheon, and walked an hour; they then wrote again till they dressed for dinner. After dinner they (Hayley and Cowper) were employed in translating an Italian Play on the subject of Satan; about twenty lines was the number every day. After that they walked, or played at Coits; then tea, and after that they read till supper time. This was their general plan of each day. I mention this as an example of the most rational employment of time, and of the greatest industry.'

The Weston party remained at Eartham for more than six weeks, but the painter was back again in London early in September. In the intervals snatched from portrait-painting he continued to busy himself with studies for his projected picture of the 'Banquet Scene'

[1] See pages 230 and 232, and Plate xx.

from *Macbeth*. Earlier in the year, in the spring, he had made a beginning with his picture of 'Milton and his Two Daughters'; this at least, is the date given by Hayley, but if it be true that it owed its origin to 'those attic conversations at Eartham,' as John Romney states, it cannot have been begun before the autumn. It was finished in the autumn of 1793 and purchased by Mr. Whitbread, largely on the advice of Charles James Fox, whom he took to see it. The Boydells gave Romney fifty guineas for the right of reproducing it, and it was engraved in stipple by Benjamin Smith, and published on the 4th June 1795. This engraving is reproduced in Mrs. Gamlin's book. It represents the blind poet seated in an arm-chair, covered with a long cloak, and dictating *Paradise Lost* to his two daughters, one of whom is writing, while the other holds an open volume, and is gazing at her father. Some years after painting it Romney received a set of verses upon it from an unknown correspondent, a Mr. J. Cooper, as 'an acknowledgment for the pleasure he has received from the exquisite composition' a print of which had just been presented to him. The picture still remains in the possession of the original purchaser's family. He had in contemplation at this time a series of works of a similar kind, each one dealing with some celebrated person; but 'Newton Displaying the Prismatic Colours' was the second, and the last, subject of the intended set that he actually painted. Two others that he had in view were Lord Bacon, collecting snow for an experiment, and Sir Christopher Wren, in his old age, carried by his servant, as was his annual custom, into the centre of St. Paul's so that he might survey his handiwork.

'But these with a thousand other projects of art, that floated in the busy mind of my friend, were destined to perish without being so fortunate as to assume the shapes, that he hoped to give them,' says his poetic biographer, who suggests that the exceptional activity which he noticed in the working of Romney's imagination in 1792, may have been partly due to the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the February of that year.

This event, he was of opinion, 'rather quickened than relaxed the ambition of Romney. He felt all the merits of his great departed predecessor, and was anxious so to employ the precarious residue of his own impaired health, that he might also hope for a considerable portion of posthumous regard.'

In the following November we get the first intimation of a project with which Romney was much occupied for the remainder of his life,

MRS. BLANSHARD

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. C. S. PEMBLETON

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GEORGE AND KATHERINE CORNEWALL

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE REV. SIR GEORGE H. CORNEWALL, BT.

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a project which gave him not only much anticipatory pleasure, but also an infinite amount of worry. In the course of a letter to Eartham, he states :—'I am just now in treaty for a piece of ground to build a painting room.' His first plan was to build himself a larger and more commodious studio two or three miles out of London, not only for his own greater convenience, but for the purpose of founding there an academy for the training of young artists under his own supervision.

Among other incidents of 1792, he received a letter from Miss Seward, on July 6th, addressed to her 'beloved and honoured Titiano,' asking if it would be possible for a young man of her acquaintance, one Dodd, of Lichfield, to become his pupil. The youth, however, does not seem to have entered Romney's studio.

Before the close of the year he added very considerably to his collection of casts from antique sculptures. 'Having lately devoted more of his time to historical painting in consequence of the Shakspeare Gallery,' writes his son, 'he began to experience a want of casts to aid his memory, and to correct the imperfections of nature in studying the *Nude*; he, therefore, sent to his friend Flaxman at Rome, one hundred pounds, and commissioned him to purchase to that amount such as he should deem the best and most suitable, according to his experienced judgment and taste.'

The sculptor gladly carried out his wishes. On September 12th, he sent word that he had just despatched 'ten large cases of plaister casts' by ship from Leghorn, having spent several months in collecting them; 'and I think I have sent you the cream of the finest things in Rome, as far as the money would go.' Among those purchased were copies of the Laocoon—the Apollo Belvedere—Castor and Pollux—Cupid and Psyche—Apollo as the Lizard-killer—the bas-relief on the Borghese vase—a bas-relief of the destruction of Niobe's children—several busts—and 'all the best fragments of legs and arms.'

'Mr. Romney had great pleasure in studying and contemplating these casts,' continues his filial biographer; 'and I have known him sometimes have evening parties in his private painting-room, when he suspended a powerful lamp over the Laocoon, which, by its descending rays, gave a bold relief to the muscles and prominences of the figures, and a terrific grandeur to the group altogether, approaching to something like reality.' He also explained to his son a scheme he had devised for illuminating the stage of a theatre from above in a similar way.

Included among his portraits of 1792 were a group of the two children of Mr. Fazakerley, a half-length, and one of Thomas Paine, painted for Dr. Thomas P. Cooper, of Manchester, who emigrated with his family to America about the year 1797, taking the portrait with him. He became president of the South Carolina College, and after his death in 1840, the portrait is said to have passed into the hands of a Mr. Matsell, an official of Brooklyn, New York. At this period it was looked upon as a work from the brush of John Wesley Jarvis, in whose house Paine resided in 1806; but Mr. Moncure D. Conway, who lent the picture for a time to the National Portrait Gallery in 1897, considered it to be the original portrait of Paine by Romney, and gave his reasons for this belief in a communication to the *Athenæum* (June 26th, 1897, p. 848). The portrait presented to the National Portrait Gallery in 1892 by Mr. Henry Willett is by Auguste Millière after Romney. John Romney was of opinion that this was 'one of the finest heads ever produced by pencil, both for professional skill, and physiognomical expression. The character is simple, but vulgar; shrewd, but devoid of feeling.' It was engraved by William Sharp in the spring of 1793, the only engraver of the day, according to the artist's son, who could do justice to his father's painting.

On January 5th, 1793, he wrote to Hayley:—'My plaister figures are unpacked, and I am charmed with them, both for the choice, and the perfection of the casts. I shall have one of the finest Museums in London for antique sculpture.' He also speaks of some friend who had wounded him deeply. 'He accused me of neglecting my portraits, and of vanity in doing things that do not turn to account. O what a damper! he likes money better than fame; but no more! I am afraid I am troublesome; you will see I have been wounded, and excuse me.'

As the years rolled on, Hayley still continued to deluge Romney with suggestions for pictures. In the foregoing letter he is thanked for the 'descriptions of the picturesque prison scenes which will produce new ideas in my mind.' In February the painter tells him that 'when you can send me a hint for a picture, you encrease my pleasure in a great degree.' In June Hayley proposed that Cowper, Romney, and Hodges should collaborate in 'some considerable confederate work.' In reply, Romney wrote—'Your humble servant will be glad to lend his hand to any work within his power. I told you before that I had new plans in my mind; and I am now putting

them into execution: I have taken lodgings in a new garden ground, on the Kilburn road, where I breakfast every morning, and where I work two hours in advancing my designs (for my series of large pictures). I have advanced them very much, and expect to complete them before summer is over. I have formed a plan of building a painting room, which perhaps may be the first stone of a theatre, as it may join to a plan of that sort, when I wish to take it up. Indeed spending my mornings in this way, has led me to form various schemes and plans, which neither you, nor any body else would suppose.'

Romney had considerable muscular strength, and was anxious to do everything that he could to keep himself in good health, but his habits of work continually counteracted these efforts, more particularly at the beginning of summer, when he was pressed to finish a number of pictures, and when the hot weather made the added exertion very trying. Hence this increasing desire for a residence outside London. On July 6th, in writing to thank Hayley for his suggestion of the advantage of horse exercise, he says: 'I would pursue any plan to enjoy health and spirits, if it was ever so laborious, for I have been so overcome, with lassitude, that I had no power to do any thing, though not ill.' He adds that he is too busy to visit Eartham at present. On the 18th he is in better spirits, and regrets that he cannot join his friend while Gibbon, the historian, is with him. He again mentions Hayley's scheme of some work in collaboration with 'tender-minded Cowper,' and is flattered with the prospect of sharing in it. 'I continue to go to my little villa to breakfast, and make designs every morning, which has been a delightful relief this hot weather. I have eight children to wait on me, and fine ones. I begin to feel the necessity of having these innocent little spirits about one, they give more soft delight to the mind than I can describe to soften the steps down declining life.'

These were the children of an honest couple in humble circumstances in whose house the artist hired a room in which to take breakfast and work at his designs, for seven shillings and sixpence a week. He proved to be the good angel of these worthy people, for when on one occasion he found the whole family on the point of being turned out into the street, homeless and penniless, for a debt of £200, he at once advanced the money and relieved them of the burden. 'The charity of Romney,' comments Hayley, 'was not only great, but genuine;

for it was often conducted with absolute privacy, and never with ostentation.'

On August 2nd he wrote to Eartham:—'I have seen the book of prints for the Odyssey, by our dear and admirable artist Flaxman. They are outlines without shadow, but in the style of antient art. They are simple, grand, and pure; I may say with truth, very fine. They look as if they had been made in the age, when Homer wrote.' A few days later he tells his correspondent:—'I long to hasten down to you, and tell you all my feelings and complaints, and to strip myself of drudgery in the shabby part of my art, for a while at least; and I should be happy if I could do so without ever taking it up again.'

He followed his letter shortly afterwards, and remained until the middle of September, taking a very needful rest, and as much air and exercise as possible. On his return, however, he was again plunged in the depths of depression, as may be gathered from an epistle to Hayley sent from 'Pine Apple Place,' as he named the Kilburn cottage.

Lord Egremont called on him soon after he was back, for the purpose of suggesting that he should paint a picture for him, when next he was at Eartham. Romney was only too pleased to undertake something of the kind, as he had a great desire to see one of his own works among the many fine canvases at Petworth. In giving this piece of news to Hayley, he adds—'I have begun two pictures, since I returned, both in the Corregiesque style.'

On October 11th, writing to the same correspondent, he tells him:—'I am delighted with the ideas you have suggested. I must say you are more happy in forming in your mind subjects suitable for pictures, than all the men of learning and taste, I ever met with, put together. I shall be ever grateful for those you have suggested at various times for my improvement and pleasure, and request you will never neglect me in that point. . . . If you and Cowper would join in a work with prints, from designs of Flaxman, and your humble servant.—But more of this when I have the pleasure of seeing you.'

On December 12th, he mentions other projects for pictures:—'I have been low some days past, which prevented my writing. I had not power; perhaps it is the weather that affects me. Yet I have not been negligent in my ideas of pictures. I have been arranging some of the subjects in the Seven Ages, and think I shall be able to make some of them out soon. Then I mean to send them to you for your

approbation. I think of making my pictures the size of my Indian woman, and the number of the set twelve. What do you think of the plan?'

One of his favourite projects at this period of his life was to paint a set of pictures showing the whole life of man, from birth to death, though with no intention of confining himself closely to Shakespeare's lines. 'Romney was willing to take a leading idea from one of our great poets, but he had an excursive vigour and richness of fancy, that made him delight in adding images of his own creation to those, that were furnished by the author, from whom he caught the ground work of his intended composition.'[1] The only one of the series which he began to paint, the 'Infant,' was never finished. It represented a mother, reclining on a couch, surrounded by attendants, clasping her child to her breast, while the husband, 'a young man of florid health in the habiliments of a hunter,' was stooping down to kiss the two before setting out for the chase.

The picture of the 'Indian Woman,' mentioned in this letter, taken from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, was painted in the winter of 1793, and bought by William Beckford, of Fonthill, in 1797, for 300 guineas, and 'afterwards sold in his first sale to a gentleman, I believe of Dorsetshire, for nearly the same sum,' says John Romney.

This canvas, which his son thought 'one of the most exquisite of Mr. Romney's pictures,' represented Titania and the Indian Woman, a votaress of her order, and was suggested by the lines from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II., Scene 1, beginning

> 'When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
> And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind.'

Romney made a sketch of the subject in oil-colours at Eartham, which he gave to young Tom Hayley. 'He afterwards painted the subject with variations on a larger canvas, of a different shape, with great care and felicity. There is infinite lustre, gaiety, and tenderness in the fanciful composition,' is Hayley's verdict.

Cumberland, speaking of the same picture says:—'Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill, has *The Indian Woman* contemplating a Ship at Sea, and imitating the Action of the Sails, as distended by the Wind: the image is caught from Shakspeare, and the character, scenery, and execution are beautiful.'

[1] Hayley, page 208.

This picture must not be confused with one now in the Shakespeare Memorial, Stratford-on-Avon, No. 15, which was presented by Mr. Charles E. Flower. This is a canvas 4 ft. $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. × 3 ft. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in., representing 'Titania Reposing with her Indian Votaries.' It illustrates the lines in Act II., Scene 2, of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

> 'Come, now a roundel, and a fairy song;
> Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
> Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
> Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
> To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
> The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
> At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
> Then to your offices, and let me rest.'

Titania is shown reclining on the ground in a sitting posture by the edge of a pool in the wood near Athens, nude to the waist, looking towards the spectator with her face resting on her hands. To the right a band of dusky musicians beguile the queen with music, and in the background two small fairies are attacking the 'rere-mice.' The figure of Titania, which the Stratford catalogue says is a portrait of Lady Hamilton, is finished, but the rest of the composition only sketched in. The catalogue also states that it was formerly in the Beckford collection, but this is probably a mistake, the author of the statement having confused this canvas with the 'Indian Votaress' picture which was once at Fonthill. It was purchased by Mr. Flower at a sale of pictures at some actors' club in London.

The Stratford picture is evidently one of the numerous unfinished studies which Romney made from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* about 1793, of which John Romney speaks in the following passage, after describing the 'Indian Votaress' picture:—

'He painted about this time, also, the *Death of Ophelia*, and *Susan*, from the ballad of "When the Seas were roaring"; neither of which was in a finished state. And those various unfinished pictures, representing *Titania* under different circumstances, and in different attitudes; one of which, a beautiful naked figure, I regret much that I did not reserve from the sale. It was, in truth, a very fairy. It represented her reposing in her bower, and in a state of somnolency; and, if I remember rightly, Bottom sleeping by her side. All these except one, were, I believe, bought by artists; and have, I have no doubt, contributed essentially to improve the taste

of the succeeding generation of painters. The one excepted was that of Titania, Puck and the Changeling, purchased by Sir John Leicester.'

This last named picture, which was No. 119 in the Romney sale of 1807, was described in the catalogue as 'Titania, the Changeling and Puck on a Seashore, unfinished: a surprising Picture of Poetical Sportive Invention, treated with Corregiesque taste and magic effect, one of the happiest efforts of the Artist!' In John Romney's own copy of the sale catalogue it is marked as bought in at 65 guineas, so that possibly Sir John Leicester acquired it shortly afterwards. At Sir John's own sale, when Lord de Tabley, in 1827, it was bought by Mr. Walter Russell, of Ilam Hall, for 155 guineas, and when he, in turn, sold his pictures in 1875, it was purchased by Messrs. Agnew for 230 guineas, from whom it passed into the hands of Miss Romney. At her sale in 1894 it was bought for 205 guineas for the National Gallery of Ireland. It was engraved in stipple by Edward Scriven in 1810, and this engraving is reproduced in George Paston's *Life* of the artist.

It represents, on the left, the 'lovely boy stolen from an Indian king' naked on his back on the sea sand, with Puck, another nude figure, playfully holding his left foot. On the right Titania reclines, facing the spectator, resting on her elbows, her chin in her two hands, bare to the waist, a white fillet round her hair, and the lower half of her body covered with red drapery. She is smiling, and her face is an evident recollection of Lady Hamilton.

A smaller and less finished study for this picture was included in the 1807 sale, No. 102, 'A fine study for the Titania, Changeling, and Puck, richly coloured,' which fetched 12 guineas. Titania's attitude in this picture and in the one at Stratford are not alike, though in each case the head is supported by the hands; but it is very possible that the latter is an earlier study laid aside in favour of the 'Seashore' group. The Stratford picture itself was, there is little doubt, also in this sale, No. 105, 'Titania Reposing, unfinished, an elegant and poetical study,' which likewise fell at 12 guineas. It is very probable that this picture is the one which John Romney wished he had reserved.

Romney's studio was just as crowded throughout 1793 as it had been ten years earlier, but his rapidly failing health made the work of portrait painting more irksome than ever, so that many unfinished

canvases were added to those which already blocked up the passages and corners of his house. In a letter to his brother, Colonel Romney, written some time in 1793, he complains rather bitterly of this: 'My health is not at all constant—my nerves give way, and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last, to be enabled to finish the numbers I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces. There is a delight in the novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished; but it must be done.'

Among his portraits of 1793 were the two whole-lengths of the Margrave and Margravine of Anspach, another of the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, for the University of Aberdeen, and the Horsley children.

XVII

ON January 10th, 1794, Romney wrote thus to Hayley:—'My Ophelia is nearly finished, and the Seven Ages are going on well. I mean to paint the first directly—but silence!' About a month later, he continued in the same strain:—

'I had formed a plan of painting the Seven Ages, and also the Visions of Adam with the Angel, to bring in the flood, and the opening of the ark, which would make six large pictures (but this is a profound secret). Indeed to tell you the truth, I have made designs for all the pictures, and very grand subjects they are. I beg no human creature may have a hint of it. My plan was, if I should live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six other subjects from Milton: three where Satan is the hero, and three of Adam and Eve. Perhaps six of each. I have ideas of them all, and I may say sketches; but alas! I cannot begin any thing for one year or two, and if my name was mentioned, I should hear nothing but abuse, and that I cannot bear. Fear has been always my enemy. My nerves are too weak for supporting anything in public.'

Romney, when in good humour, would jest about this extravagant timidity, which at other times made him so miserable. 'His imagination was indeed singularly used to start and tremble at phantoms of its own creation; but in a field of battle I am persuaded he would have shewn not only manly valour, but even a spirit of adventurous heroism,' is the verdict of his friend.

In May, Hayley, on a visit to London, found him in very indifferent health. Shortly after the bard's return home, Romney sent word that he was better, and that soon he would begin to look about him, and jostle in the world again. 'Yes! and bend my bow at those, that kick and tread upon me. It is a hard fate that a painter is obliged to live in a state of warfare, and jostling. I never more earnestly wished myself out of the bustle of business than at present. O for tranquillity and peace!' In July he wrote in better spirits, saying that he was about to visit the Isle of Wight with his son and a young friend of the latter's, and

hoped to call at Eartham by the way, and again when returning home. He also suggested that Hayley and his son should join them in a tour he was projecting in Holland, as he wished to purchase pictures there. This latter plan, however, was given up.

Father and son remained at Cowes about three weeks, making excursions to different parts of the island. Romney wrote several letters to Hayley during this holiday, in one of which he said—'I have a plan in contemplation of a little academy next winter in the room under my gallery. I think Flaxman will approve of it. The advantage will be much greater, when each can set his figures, as suits him, and with the quiet of only three persons.' This idea, in Hayley's opinion, originated in Romney's desire to help the former's son, who had a great wish to become a sculptor; and the two friends were anxious that the lad should make a beginning as a pupil of Flaxman.

In August it was the turn of the painter to endeavour to cheer up the poet, who had been ill. 'Indeed if you should go before me,' he told him, 'I should lose every thing that is dear to me, and the best friend I ever had.' In September, however, he was once more depressed about himself. 'I wish I could say I am better, or that my mind is agreeably amused. To divert my mind a little I have begun the first stage of man, and the prison scene; also a great cartoon. I am now without a friend here that I dare speak to. They ask me why I do not finish my pictures? etc. I wish to God you could contrive to come and stay all the winter. Forgive me!'

Ten days later, Dr. Ainslie, who happened to call, found him so ill that he sent for John Romney from Cambridge to look after him, though the latter could only stay for a short time, on account of his duties. Flaxman was then on his way home, to the painter's great delight. 'Though he is not here in person,' he wrote, 'I have caught a portion of his soul from the beautiful images of his Homer and Dante. I am charmed with them, they have thrown a light upon my mind, that has dissipated some of its thick gloom. Flaxman's taste leans much to the old cathedral, simple, and pure. I long to see him return, and if he arrives soon I think of accompanying him to your lovely abode.'

Flaxman had greatly enhanced his reputation during his sojourn in Rome. Lord Holland, who met him there, said of him in his *Memoirs*:[1]

[1] *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, 1807-1821, by Henry Richard Vassall, third Lord Holland, edited by Lord Stavordale, 1905.

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'Flaxman, indeed, visited Italy while I was there. I am afraid I was more struck with the deformity of his person, the sanctity of his primitive manners, and the visionary turn of his opinions, than with his works or conversation; but the Italians had more sagacity than his countrymen, and discerned early the grand originality of his conceptions, his just ideas of beauty, and the real simplicity of his character. His sketches and models were studied as works of established excellence even then at Rome. He was, in truth, as Lord Egremont comically designated him, a prodigy of deformity and genius. If unequal, from bodily infirmity, to complete any great *chef-d'œuvre* in sculpture, he continued to enlighten his contemporaries and followers: and did more by his example and his drawings to improve art than any Englishman, Sir Joshua, in the sister branch, always excepted.'

A letter that Romney sent to Hayley on October 18th, upon hearing the sad news of Cowper's mental condition, may be regarded almost as prophetic. 'If there is a blessing in nature above all others, it is when a man recovers his lost reason. And if there is a situation more deplorable than any other in nature, it is the horrible decline of reason, and the derangement of that power, we have been blest with. How hard it is for a man with a feeling mind to preserve that balance in his understanding, that carries him well through life! Bless all those who dedicate their time to the weakness of the human mind!'

Romney was now so thoroughly out of health that he did not wait in London for Flaxman's return, but hurried down to Eartham, where, says his host, 'our first object was to amuse, and fortify his mind against the encroachment of that insidious malady the hypochondria, which has so frequent and cruel a tendency to impede the exertions of active genius.' For this purpose Hayley and his son took the artist for an excursion into Hampshire. They went to Portsmouth, and on the way home spent some hours with Dr. Warton, at Wickham. Romney was cheered by the praise the great scholar bestowed on his cartoons from scenes taken from Greek tragedy, notably the design for the 'Dream of Atossa' from the *Persae* of Aeschylus, a favourite drama of Warton's. 'The cartoon,' he thought, 'was so powerful in its spirit and expression, that it seemed worthy to have been applauded by Aeschylus himself.'

The Eartham visit, however, was cut short, and Romney was hastily recalled to town owing to pressure of business. In November he wrote

in the greatest delight announcing the safe return of Flaxman. 'I am still more charmed with him than ever; his company is delightful. Indeed I am quite made happy by his return.' Some days later he continued—'Flaxman is returned from the Country, and has been very kind in getting my casts from the Custom house. I believe I may now say I have the best private collection in London. He has fixed on a house, and near me, which is delightful to my feelings. He is a most accomplished artist.' This was No. 6 Buckingham Street, Fitzroy Square.

In the winter he was at work on the picture of 'Newton Making Experiments with the Prism,' as a companion to 'Milton and his Daughters.' The face of the laughing girl he afterwards altered, in 1799, 'when his powers were almost extinct,' and by doing so he spoiled the picture, for, after beginning to make the change, he was not able to finish it. Later on his son tried to remove this new painting, but only succeeded in making matters worse. Both Hayley and Cumberland were anxious that it should be purchased for Trinity College, Cambridge, but without success. The authorities replied that they possessed already Roubilliac's statue of Newton, and that, therefore they could not undertake to acquire the picture as well. Romney painted the head of Newton from the mask which Roubilliac had used. He painted a second portrait from a mask, that of Alderman Beckford, a commission from Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill, in which he was represented at full length, in his robes as Lord Mayor of London, when making his reply to the king's answer to the petition of the Corporation in 1770.

Other portraits of this year (1794) were a whole length of the Duke of Portland; Abraham Newland, for the Bank of England; the Earl of Euston (Duke of Grafton), for the Marquis Camden, then Viceroy of Ireland; and a 'three-quarters' of his own son, which was finished in two sittings, the whole time not exceeding three hours—'a specimen of his bold and spirited manner.'

At the beginning of 1795 young Thomas Hayley, then in his fifteenth year, came up to London as the pupil of Flaxman, to whom he was bound as an apprentice on the 1st of February. He naturally saw much of Romney, who watched over his artistic training with fatherly care. The latter was then at work on a large picture, which had been suggested to him by Hayley in the previous year—the 'Saviour in the Wilderness' from *Paradise Regained.* This, how-

ever, was never finished, with the exception of the principal head, which was engraved in outline by A. Raimbach, for Hayley's *Life*.

The lines on which the picture was based were:—

> 'Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
> Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
> Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
> Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace.'

In the opinion of his son, 'had he finished this picture, it would have ranked him with Michael Angelo. It was equal in original conception and wild fancy to any thing ever produced by any artist. When one looked at Christ, silent passiveness was the idea which presented itself to the spectator; when at the fiends that assailed him, vociferating noise and boisterous insult. These visionary beings were the human passions and appetites personified. To aid the malevolent purpose, the illusive representations, or ghosts of Eve and Noah, were called forth. And the arch-fiend, the Miltonic Satan, grand as the human mind can conceive him, viewed from the upper corner of the picture, with malignant satisfaction, the ready obedience of his imps. The canvass, as far as I remember, was about sixteen feet by twelve; the ground was a darkish brown, and the figures were drawn with white chalk complete. It was all ready for painting, and the head of Christ was nearly finished, and that of Satan begun. From the darkness of the canvass, I should suppose that it was his intention to have given a sombre hue, and gloomy effect to the whole picture, corresponding both to the duskiness of the twilight, and to the character of its infernal agents and their design. . . . The Temptation, being of inconvenient size, had been rolled up; and in that state was sent to Christie's auction room along with Mr. Romney's other pictures; not with any intention of exposing it for sale, but merely that it might be seen by the public; unfortunately there was no space for it, and it was never unrolled.' John Romney lost all trace of it after the etching of the head of Christ had been made from it for Hayley's book.

Hayley, with an exaggeration due to paternal pride in his 'lively boy,' declares that Romney 'thought so highly of his pure and intelligent mind, that he frequently consulted him, and particularly on occasions relating to art. This young counsellor who thought glory infinitely preferable to gold, exhorted Romney continually to relieve himself from the drudgery, of which he was very apt to complain, by bidding adieu to portraits, and devoting all his time to historical composition; advice the more seasonable, as the painter seemed in this

year to have been almost overwhelmed by the multitude of his sitters.'

The following extracts from letters written by young Tom to his father during the month of March in this year, show what a constant visitor he was to Romney's studio, and how kind the elder artist was to him :—' I fear he will never leave off portraits, for he has constantly new sitters. When I go, there is Lord this, or Lady that, sitting, whereby I cannot catch sight of him.'

' Mrs Flaxman is very good to me, and so is the immortal painter; he desires that I would choose any of his casts to model from, that I please. He intends to take lodgings in Hampstead, to recruit his strength a little, for portrait-painting knocks him up. He has begun his head of our Saviour in the wilderness; it is very much the thing, I think; I am quite in his confidence.'[1]

' (*March 27th*). Drank tea at Mr. Romney's, with Mr. and Mrs. Flaxman, Mr. French and Miss Nicholas.'

' I am indeed in great favour with the *Caro Pittore*, whom, from his legion of blue devils, we call the magnanimous Admiral of the Blues. He is to give me a little figure that he painted of you in the character of Jacques, lying down and leaning on his elbow.'

Romney was, indeed, most anxious to abandon portrait painting, but had not the strength of mind to do so. On June 17th he informed Hayley—' I am going to decline business, to wind up my bottom and then build me a house, which I hope will inspire me with new vigour, and I pray God, I may recover my spirits to go on anew. I have still the same passion for art, and begin to feel at times a regeneration in my mind, that approaches to something more refined. Our dear little sculptor has made an excellent copy. He surprises me more and more. I do not know I ever saw such rapid progress before in any art.'

On the 30th of the same month, he continued in the same strain—' I am still unsettled where and when I shall fix my first stone, and make my gravel walks, and plant my cedars; but to build my house and plant my cedars, I am determined. God light up the imaginations of lawyers!'

On the 3rd of September he tells the same correspondent how flattered he feels to hear of Flaxman's approval of his portrait group of the Bosanquet family. This picture, representing a lady and five children, is one of the most important canvases he attempted towards

[1] Hayley's *Memoirs of his Son*, p. 124. The same letter, with slight variations, is printed in the *Life*, p. 231.

the end of his career, or, indeed, at any period of his life. He never gave it the last finishing touches, but there was so little left to be done to it that the fine effect it produces is in no way marred. The lady, Mrs. William Bosanquet, is seated on the extreme left of the canvas, in a red arm-chair placed out of doors in front of a stone pillar or portico. She holds a sleeping baby on her lap, with the fore-finger of her left hand placed against her mouth as a warning to the other members of the group not to wake the child. She wears a dress of alternate stripes of olive green and dark green or black, and her brown hair, which curls upon her shoulders, is tied with a white ribbon. She has a strong, handsome, and intelligent face. All the children have yellow curls and rosy cheeks. The youngest boy, in a white frock and brown sash, stands next to his mother, with his right hand holding the end of a string of coral beads fastened round the baby's waist, and the left hand stretched back to take a pear from his eldest sister, who stands in the middle of the group, also in white, with olive-green sash, and is holding up her skirt with both hands to catch the fruit which one of the boys is shaking from a tree. On the other side of her, a second brother reaches up towards a pear on a branch on the extreme right, which the eldest boy is bending down to him. He also is dressed in white, with a dark sash; and long curls fall almost to his waist. He has a very winsome face, and looks over his left shoulder at the spectator. The eldest lad, who wears a tight-fitting suit of Indian red with a white collar, has climbed some little way up the tree, and supports himself with a knee resting on a branch and his left arm round the trunk. He is looking down towards his baby sister on his mother's lap. The background, consisting of foliage, cloudy sky, and an indication of blue hills in the distance, is unfinished. One or two of the heads also want the finishing touches put to them, but all have great natural sweetness and a winning beauty of expression. (See Plate XXI.)

This picture, although it cannot be compared with the great one of the little Staffords dancing in a ring, painted nearly twenty years before it, is one of the best composed of all Romney's groups, and is certainly the most important canvas he undertook during the last decade of his life. Both in general arrangement and in the movement of each of the figures the result obtained is very natural and unaffected, and one can see that the painter was in close sympathy with his subject. The figure of the mother is admirable, and the sleeping baby is one of his prettiest renderings of childhood. The draperies are flat and simple, with a few plain folds, and have none of the elaboration which

distinguishes those in the Stafford pictures, which were painted under the fresh influence of his two years' study of classical models. The Bosanquet group is much less 'Greek,' but it is a very fresh and very delightful rendering of a happy English family.

The lady in the picture, Charlotte Elizabeth, daughter of John Ives, of Norwich, married William Bosanquet in December 1787. His grandfather, David Bosanquet, came to England at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Various members of his family had much to do with the East India Company. His elder brother, Jacob, of Broxbourne Bury, Herts, was one of its directors for forty-five years. There is a monument to his father in the Abbey Church of Bath. William Bosanquet himself was a member of the banking house of Forster, Lubbock and Co. He died at his house, No. 5 Upper Harley Street, on June 21st, 1800, in his forty-third year, and left twelve children. His wife died in 1806.

The three boys in the picture were William George Ives, born in 1789, Augustus Henry, and John Ives, who all entered the service of the Honourable East India Company. The tall girl, born 1790, was named after her mother, Charlotte Elizabeth Ives. The baby was Sophia, who married her cousin, John William Commerell, and became the mother of Sir Edmund Commerell, V.C., A.D.C., K.C.B., Admiral of the Fleet, 1892. Had Mr. Bosanquet lived, he would have sat for his portrait with the remainder of his children, of whom the youngest were twins, born in 1799. Mrs. Bosanquet was a very beautiful woman, and her portrait was painted more than once, among others by Sir William Beechey.

While speaking of this fine family group, which is in the possession of Major Bosanquet, of the Sherwood Foresters, it is interesting to note that in April, 1798, Mr. William Bosanquet, and his friends Mr. Pole and Mr. Mellish, when returning from hunting with His Majesty's Staghounds, were attacked by foot-pads on Hounslow Heath, when the last-named was so severely wounded in the forehead that he died shortly afterwards.

Romney, in the letter just quoted, says of this picture, 'I think it has unity, and sentiment. I certainly should be happy to execute the picture you mention of Lord Egremont's family. Perhaps it would be my last. But farther I cannot say yet. I am glad to hear the young Phidias is returning. I have higher hopes of him, than I ever had of any young man of his age, in talents, vigorous industry, and serenity of temper.'

Five days later he sent word that he would be hastening to Eartham in a few days with his friend Carwardine, bringing canvas and colours with which to begin the picture for which he had received a definite commission from Lord Egremont, who also made arrangements for him to execute it in the painting-room at Eartham. For this purpose the artist went down in September, taking with him young Hayley for a holiday, and during the visit the boy executed a medallion portrait of the painter. He also did one of his father, for which Romney gave him five guineas. A new inmate of the house was young George Wyndham, Lord Egremont's son, who was then under Hayley's care.

Romney returned to London early in October, but was back again in Sussex in November, in order to get on with the big picture. The illness of one of his small sitters obliged him to abandon his plan of painting it in the Eartham studio, and the walk of ten miles over the hills each day to Petworth and back again which this change of plans obliged, was advantageous both to his health and to the progress of the work.

This large group contained the portraits of four of the six natural children of George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont, their mother being the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Iliff, one of the masters of Westminster School. The Earl was never married, though more than one attempt was made to induce him to enter that state. In 1774 a match was arranged between him and Lady Mary Somerset, which came to nothing, and six years later his forthcoming marriage was announced with Lady Charlotte Maria Waldegrave, grand-niece of Horace Walpole. This, too, was soon broken off, and he seems to have treated the lady, who afterwards married the Duke of Grafton, very shabbily. Walpole was furious, calling him 'a worthless young fellow,' and never mentioning him in his published correspondence without abuse. Mrs. Delany had a better opinion of him: 'He is a pretty man, has a vast fortune, and is very generous; and not addicted to the vices of the times.'

In the picture, which is still at Petworth, the mother, in a dark dress, is represented reclining in a landscape, on the left, looking over her shoulder, with her back to the spectator, and clasping the youngest child, a mere infant, in her arms. On the extreme right a boy of ten or eleven in red is shooting at a bat with a bow and arrow, while in the centre a girl of about the same age, in white, kneels with her arms round a younger boy, who also holds a bow. The lad on the right

was the eldest son, George Wyndham, born in 1787, who attained to the rank of a colonel in the army and succeeded to all his father's possessions with the exception of the title. He was created the first Baron Leconfield in 1859. The boy in the centre was the next brother, Sir Henry Wyndham, K.C.B., M.P., a general in the army, born 1790, who fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo. There is a monument to him in Petworth Church. The girl is the eldest sister, Frances, who married Sir Charles Merrick Burrell in 1808. The Petworth catalogue states that the youngest child represented is Charlotte, afterwards Mrs. John James King, of Loxwood, who, according to Burke, was the third daughter. If Burke is correct, it seems more likely to be a portrait of the second daughter, Mary, who married, in 1819, Colonel George Fitzclarence, first Earl of Munster, illegitimate son of William IV. There was a third son, Charles Wyndham, of Rogate, Hants, a colonel in the army, and a member of Parliament. Another child, to whom Hayley had stood as godfather, died the year before the picture was begun, and the disconsolate parents spent some days at Eartham while recovering from the shock.

The Earl of Egremont made Petworth House a museum of art and a college of agriculture. Arthur Young was a frequent visitor. The noble owner was a vice-president of the British Institution, and one of the most cultivated amateurs of his day. He was one of the first to appreciate Turner, who was frequently at Petworth, where he had his own special studio. C. R. Leslie, with his wife and children, spent some weeks there annually for a number of years, and Constable was a visitor in 1834. Lord Egremont was a good friend to Haydon, and gave commissions to Flaxman and other sculptors, and was indeed, a liberal patron of the arts. At his death, in 1837, he was succeeded by his nephew, George Francis Wyndham, who died without heirs in 1845, when the title became extinct, and Petworth passed into the possession of the shooting boy of the picture.

This important group, which John Romney considered to be one of his father's best performances, he calls 'A Lady in the character of Titania, with her children as fairies, shooting at bats, with bows and arrows.' Here, however, he is mistaken. The first idea may perhaps have been to dress them in some such fanciful guise, but it was abandoned. They are represented in the costume of their own day both in the picture, which is still at Petworth, and in the large finished study for it, now belonging to Mrs. Bischoffs-

heim.[1] The picture is a pleasing one, and has some beautiful passages of colour, notably in the golden glow of sunset in the landscape background, but it can be in no way compared with such a masterpiece as the 'Dancing Children.' The composition is not nearly so effective, and the pose of the mother is awkward, though the centre group of the boy and girl is natural and good. It is an ambitious canvas, but the workmanship shows signs of the painter's declining powers.

The large study, 50 in. × 68 in., is not identical with the picture. The lady is prettier, the attitude of her head is different, and her position more recumbent. The name 'Dudman, Junr.' is written on the back of the canvas, and it seems most probable that it was left unfinished by Romney and completed by Dudman, a painter of no particular note, probably the R. Dudman, of 41 Strand, who exhibited a portrait at the Royal Academy in 1797. It is accepted both by Sir Walter Armstrong and Mr. Claude Phillips as a genuine work by Romney, showing his characteristics both in their strength and weakness, but finished in certain of the details, such as the drapery of the child in white, by Dudman. It was reproduced in *The Burlington Magazine* for August, 1905, and a note upon it was contributed by Sir Walter Armstrong in the following month.

This study was in the possession of the Sockett family until February 1905, in which year it was included in a sale at Messrs. Christie's as a work by 'W. Dudman, 1798, after G. Romney,' and was bought by Mrs. Bischoffsheim. The Rev. Thomas Sockett,[2] when a young man, lived with Hayley for a year or two, at the time of the painting of the Egremont group, and helped him in the education of young George Wyndham, and in other ways. He afterwards went to Petworth as tutor to the children, and later on entered the church, received the Petworth living, and died in 1859. There is a letter from Romney to Lord Egremont, preserved among the Petworth papers, asking him to give the sketch to Sockett, whose portrait by Thomas Phillips, R.A., is still at Petworth.

There are several other works by Romney in Petworth House which may be mentioned here. Among them is a version of 'The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy,' which is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book. It is not in very

[1] Romney certainly refers to the children in one of his letters as 'My elves and fairies,' which seems to support his son's contention.

[2] See page 174.

good condition, and is hung so that it is difficult to see it, but it is a work of real beauty, though not so fine as Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne's picture, which is illustrated here.[1] Mr. Lawrence Romney thinks that there is a third version of this subject in existence.

Another picture is wrongly described in the Petworth catalogue as 'Mirth and Melancholy (Lady Hamilton and Mrs. Smith).' Miss Wallis, the actress, sat for both figures.[2] It was in the possession of John Romney, and was purchased at his sale in 1834 by Lord Egremont for 88 guineas.

The remaining Romney canvas is 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante,' also reproduced by Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower. This picture is a replica of the lovely rendering of the fair Emma in Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne's collection, of which a reproduction appears in this book, though it by no means approaches it in beauty.[3] It is doubtful if Romney did much of it himself, and it is, perhaps, mainly the work of one of his pupils.

While at Eartham this autumn the painter also began two pictures, 'to indulge the feelings of friendship.' One was a group which included the poet himself, seated at a table with Cicero's *Essay on Friendship*, his son, Thomas Hayley, and the latter's companion, William Meyer, a son of the miniature painter, standing by his side, the one with a small statue of Minerva in his hand, the other in his Trinity College gown. A head of Romney, hastily painted, was also introduced. Hayley, however, is wrong about the date of this picture, which was not begun until 1796. The second and larger picture represented 'Flaxman modelling the bust of Hayley,' attended by his pupil Thomas Hayley, with Romney looking on from behind, all at full length. This group was never finished, and Hayley and John Romney seem to have been on the verge of a quarrel over its possession shortly after the artist's death. According to Romney's son it was claimed by Hayley, 'in consequence of some vague expression inadvertently uttered by Mr. Romney, about the time he was sitting.' It was, therefore, given to him for his life, on the understanding that it afterwards went to Mr. Greene, the solicitor. On the other hand, Hayley says that Romney wished him to have it until his death, when it was to go to Flaxman, and then at the latter's death to descend to Tom Hayley. In the end, as the artist desired, it went on Hayley's death to Mr. Greene, at that time M.P. for Lancaster.

[1] See Plate XVII.

[2] See page 155.

[3] See Plate IX.

MISS ELIZABETH WALLACE

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. J. HOPE WALLACE

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THE DUCHESS OF GORDON AND HER SON

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. CHARLES J. WERTHEIMER

Pages 309-10

It is still in the possession of his descendant, Mr. Dawson-Greene, of Whittington Hall, and is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book. A smaller version, not full-length, is in the National Portrait Gallery. It was presented in 1860 by Mr. Henry Crabb Robinson, and is possibly only a good contemporary copy. (See Plate XXII.)

In the winter of 1795 he painted a head of himself, which, 'though slight, and not entirely finished, being painted at once, shews uncommon power of execution; the likeness also, is strong, but there is a certain expression of languor that indicates the approach of disease, which had in fact already begun to assail his constitution,' as the filial comment upon it runs.[1] He represented himself without spectacles, though he had been in the habit of using glasses for many years. The pair with which he worked contained two half-glasses for each eye, separated horizontally: the lower half for viewing objects close at hand, through which he always painted; the upper for things at a greater distance, through which he judged the effect of his painting. John Romney also mentions a three-quarter length of Isaac Reed, the editor of Shakespeare, as done about this time, and given to the sitter, who in return sent Romney a copy of his edition of the poet's works, on November 7th, 1796.

In a letter dated January 19th, 1796, Romney gave Hayley an account of 'the extraordinary talents Tom has discovered in a design he has made from the New Testament, of the two Angels and Mary at the tomb of Christ. I speak with a degree of amazement. It is simple, grand, and beautiful, better conceived, and with more good sense, than any design of the same subject I have ever seen. I give you joy of this first and bright example of his invention.'

Tom at the time was working in Romney's studio at a copy of an antique head of Minerva, and also sitting to the painter, 'who has almost finished my figure in the grand picture. He has also advanced Mr. Flaxman's head, but left his own untouched.' Romney was very enthusiastic over Tom's design of the Angels at the Tomb, and told several friends about it, among them Lord Egremont, who honoured the young sculptor by a visit on purpose to see it.

On February 20th he reported that his gallery had been much frequented, among his visitors being Charles James Fox, and the Prince of Wales, the latter promising to sit to him. Soon after this he had a short but severe illness, but could not be persuaded to go to Sussex to recuperate. On March 15th he wrote: 'Your kind letter

[1] John Romney, p. 239.

was a cordial to my feelings. You know what nerves are, after severe illness; but I hope to re-establish my health without indulging in your invitation. I feel like one escaped from an enchantment, where some fiend presided. The tyranny of the disease was terrible for four days; my throat burst and the enchantment vanished. Carwardine was, and still is in town, which was fortunate for me; his cordiality made time pass more comfortably to my spirits; I now feel recovered and can work.'

Tom wrote to his father at about the same date, saying that 'Our friend Romney is now perfectly recovered, and drawing a plan for his house, to be built immediately.'

Some little time later in the spring, he was plunged once more into the depths of melancholy. 'My spirits have been so very indifferent, I have not been able to write; and now I can only say a word or two, and that is, I long to hear from you. Perhaps when the days grow longer, and I can sleep at Hampstead, I may get better, but alas! my prospect of future life, grows dreary. I can say no more at present, but I hope your spirits are good and you may defy every other calamity. My affections hover round you, God bless you.'

'The friends of Romney,' says Hayley, 'did not think his sufferings the less entitled to their attention and pity, because they knew them to be merely imaginary; on the contrary several of his associates were ever eager to employ both reason and raillery, in freeing him from those oppressive phantoms, which his powerful imagination under these transient clouds was apt to produce.' He then relates an anecdote of a visit to Kew to see some pictures by Salvator Rosa and Correggio, on which occasion Romney, although he declared himself to be half dead when his friends went to fetch him, was afterwards obliged to own that he had never passed a more delightful day in his life. 'So easy is it,' moralises the Bard, 'for seasonable kindness to triumph over the formidable legion of blue-devils.'

In July Lord Egremont was anxious that Romney should stay at Petworth in order to finish the big picture. He appears to have promised to go, but failed to do so. Hayley, in a letter to Tom, mentions as an inducement that 'my Lord has offered, in the kindest and most engaging manner, to make a warm sea-water bath for him in the friendly palace,' and hopes that 'he will try a remedy that his imagination has long panted for; and which may, indeed, produce a very beneficial effect on his marvellous frame.'

Writing early in August, Romney declares that the trip to Kew

was the first step to his recovery. 'The journey to Cambridge afterwards with our friend Carwardine, contributed to what you begun. The shaking of the coach, the scenery, the variety of company and kindness from all contributed to bring me to a working mood. I have now finished the Petworth picture, so that it may be removed, and I have also painted a lovely daughter of Lady Townshend. . . . I have been able to work hard for the last fortnight, and shall be still at work, till Mr. Bunce, the Architect, has agreed with me on my proposed building.'

'Our journey to Cambridge was undertaken,' Carwardine reported to Hayley, 'more for the change of air, and the recovery of our friend, after a severe fit of illness, than from any hope of seeing good pictures, since our universities are rather repositories for literature, than for painting. However I recollect, that when we dined with Doctor Craven, master of Saint John's, we found in his rooms, a portrait of Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and almoner to the Lady Margaret Countess of Richmond, and mother of King Henry the Seventh. She, you know, was the foundress of the college, and engaged the bishop to superintend the progress of the building. The portrait was painted by Holbein, and to give you the opinion of Romney, it is one of the very finest portraits ever painted by Holbein, or indeed by any painter. It is impossible to look at it long without forgetting that it is a picture, and viewing it as a living and venerable old man in the attitude of speaking to you. It is a half-length, and the painter's initials are visible on a cornelian, which decorates the finger of the good old Bishop. You have now all I can recollect of our Cambridge excursion.'

During the summer both the health and spirits of the painter greatly improved. He spent a longer time than usual in Sussex, and the change of air helped in his recovery. Though an indifferent horseman, he was induced to take riding exercise as well as sea-bathing. He also found much amusement over the plans of his projected building. 'He had recently purchased an old house in Hampstead, with a spacious stable on elevated ground behind it; and there he intended to form a villa, with every accommodation for the exercise of his art.'[1] Hayley, too, was thinking of building a small house at Felpham, so that the two were very busy together; nor was he altogether idle with his brush. He wrote to his son, on November

[1] Hayley, p. 249.

10th, that he had found that the change was doing him so much good that he had remained longer than usual, 'and, to continue and extend the time, and to amuse Mr. Hayley, I began a picture of four friends —Hayley, Tom, young Meyer, and myself—and completed it, which is thought one of my best.[1] The picture for Petworth I finished at Hayley's; it was very much liked. I met with particular kindness from my Lord of Petworth.'

He seems indeed, to have worked with something like his old enthusiasm and vigour during this visit. Hayley makes frequent mention of his good spirits in his letters to Tom, who was left behind in London.

'I have cheerful and charming news to send to our dear little sculptor, concerning the *Caro Pittore*. Instead of his being in a tremulous and troubled state of nervous indisposition, not knowing what to do, we have so happily improved his health and spirits that he has been exerting his admirable talents with new vigour and felicity. . . . It is a picture sacred to friendship, and I think you will be highly pleased, when I inform you that it will contain four portraits; the paternal Hermit and the friendly Painter himself, seeming (with Tully de Amicitiâ before them) to recommend friendship, as the medicine of life, to two ingenuous youths, commonly called Thomas Hayley and William Meyer. The head of our friend William is very happily painted already. Yours is just sketched from the little picture by Howard, but you are to be finished, *con amore*, from life; and the beloved artist is so kindly eager to make this favourite production a masterpiece of art, that we were almost ready to entreat Flaxman to despatch you to us for the purpose directly; but the *Caro Pittore* is now inclined to take a trip to his new works at Hampstead, with our little Palladio, and return hither again before the time proposed for your excursion.'

The 'little Palladio,' who was the architect of Romney's Hampstead house, though the painter seems to have had an unusually large share in its planning, and who designed Hayley's marine villa at Felpham, was S. Bunce, a pupil of James Wyatt, R.A. He exhibited designs for various ambitious buildings, such as a Theatre, a Mausoleum, an Arsenal, a Bath, and a Casino at the Royal Academy

[1] This picture, which was engraved by Caroline Watson as a frontispiece to the second volume of Hayley's own *Memoirs*, with the head of Romney omitted, was bequeathed by Hayley to Captain Godfrey, whose grandson sold it at Christie's on May 12th, 1888, when it was purchased by Mr. Shepherd for £84. It is 49 inches by 39 inches.

between 1786 and 1788, when his address was 'At Mr. Wyatt's, Queen Anne Street, East.' From that date until 1791 there were no contributions from him to the annual exhibitions, and during the greater part of that time he was studying in Rome, where he became very intimate with Flaxman. The latter, writing to Romney, on April 15th, 1790, to tell him of the new plans which will delay his return to England for nearly three years, through the generous commissions given him by Lord Bristol, says: 'I take the advantage of Mr. Bunce's return to England, to repeat my thanks to you for the many singular instances of friendship I have received from your kindness; and I hope you will believe whatever distance of time or place may separate us, they can never diminish my high respect for your character, and gratitude for your good offices; and believe me I am equally solicitous for your happiness in all particulars as if I was present to be a sharer in it. . . . Mr. Bunce, the gentleman who does me the favour to present this letter, was my most esteemed friend in Rome, both for the excellence of his moral character, and his abilities in architecture; he was present when that noble patron of arts, the generous Lord Bristol gave me a draft in writing for the payment of my work, which I am to receive as I may have occasion for it. . . . As my friend Mr. Bunce was present on this occasion, he can inform you of all the particulars relating to that transaction, as well as every other particular relating to me and my dear Nancy, who upon this occasion has behaved with the most heroic virtue.'

It was in this way that Romney made the acquaintance of Bunce, who, on returning to London, seems to have started on an independent professional career in Kirby Street, Hatton Garden, from which address he sent a design for a College to the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1791. In the following year he moved to 25 Queen Street, Holborn, continuing to exhibit until 1797, either original designs, among them Italian artificial cascades for villas, or drawings made in Italy, such as 'The Temple of Apollo at Cori.' It was between Bunce's offices in Queen Street and Romney's studio in Cavendish Square that young Tom Hayley was obliged to 'fly like a shuttlecock' in May 1797, in his endeavours to get the two busy and undecided men to fix some definite day on which they could all go down together to Eartham.

In a second letter to his son, written on August 26th, which also has reference to Romney's proposed building at Hampstead, Hayley

speaks of him as one who 'with all his oddities, is an enchanting friend, and whom I love better and better, since he has delighted us and himself with a picture that breathes the true spirit of friendship, and of which you are to be so considerable a part.' Romney, indeed, was so anxious to begin building and to consult the architect, that he and his host ran up to London for four or five days, and on their return to Eartham, on September 2nd, took back Tom with them.

This picture of the four friends was, says John Romney, the last considerable picture he painted. 'Here terminates Mr. Romney's professional life: and I believe, I may truly say, that the number of pictures painted by him during the twenty one years he resided in Cavendish Square, has not been exceeded by any other artist in the same period; exclusive of an immense quantity of unfinished portraits and other works, which had been accumulated from various causes—and all this in the decline of life, when his general health was infirm, when his application was frequently interrupted by intervals of sickness, and when, latterly, his genius had almost constantly to struggle with an oppressive and debilitating languor.'

He painted several other portraits at Eartham in 1796, including a head of William Guy, the surgeon of Chichester, of whom Cowper said 'that he won his heart at first sight,' while Romney declared 'that he had never examined any manly features, which he would sooner chuse for a model, if he had occasion to represent the compassionate benignity of our Saviour.'

Towards the end of September 'the trio of friends enjoyed a sort of triumphal delight in seeing that production of Romney's pencil, which he had so fervently wished to place, as a monument of his genius, in the mansion of Petworth, suspended there with splendid effect, and the most friendly applause.'[1]

An excursion was also made to Wilton to see the celebrated collection of statuary, and to Stonehenge. They stayed two nights in Salisbury, and spent the best part of a day at Wilton, where Romney greatly enjoyed Lord Radnor's fine collection of pictures. On their way back they visited Dr. Warton at Wickham, and Romney returned to London on October 6th.

He relapsed into his usual depression of spirits almost as soon as he was home, but was able to work on several paintings, including a group

[1] Hayley's own *Memoirs*, page 233.

of his old friend Adam Walker and his family, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

In the middle of November Hayley paid him an unexpected visit, and while there Tom spent his evenings in Cavendish Square, drawing by the side of his father, who read romances aloud for the general amusement. Romney was at work at the time on the full-length portrait of a lady, and Hayley persuaded him to represent her 'in a picturesque greenhouse with some rare and magnificent flower in her hand'; and for this purpose, on his journey back to Sussex, took the painter with him as far as Kew, where, with the assistance of Mr. Aiton, the royal gardener, they succeeded in finding a flower of the kind which the poet thought would add so greatly to the picture.

On Christmas Day Tom Hayley wrote to his father that Romney was about to finish the 'Four Friends' group, and that, having become a tolerably good rider, he had purchased a pony, which 'seemed to keep the painter alive'; but though this new form of exercise was of benefit to his health, his fits of melancholy grew deeper and more frequent, and caused his intimate friends much alarm.

'It was a favorite idea of Mr. Romney's in the decline of life, to form a complete Gallery of Casts,' writes his son, 'and to open it to any youths of respectability; and thus to afford to others those facilities of study, of which he himself had not had the benefit: so that when his own practical powers should forsake him, he might still have the gratification of promoting the acquirements of others by superintending their studies himself—*vice cotis.* This scheme was in a great measure visionary; he had, however, at the close of his career, three pupils who have since distinguished themselves.' These were, Isaac Pocock, who was with him for some time; Lonsdale, who copied from his casts and studied his works, under the artist's supervision, in the spring of 1799, at the request of the Duke of Hamilton; and Stewardson, his last pupil, who was with him when he returned to Kendal.[1]

When John Romney paid a visit to Cavendish Square in 1796, he found his father occupied in making plans of fantastic buildings instead of his customary studies for pictures. 'It was evident that his mind was thrown of its pivot, and that painting had lost its influence. He was on the point of signing a contract for four acres of ground, on the Edgware Road, at a rent of forty pounds per annum, for his life; with a stipulation that he should build a house upon it under certain restric-

[1] See page 277.

tions.' His son, who saw that his means would not permit this, suggested the advantage of buying a ready-built house, and proposed the purchase of one then in the market on Holly Bush Hill, Hampstead, his father's favourite locality, to which he might add a gallery and painting-room at a small expense. Romney agreed to this, and Sir James Graham, the solicitor, having allowed him to abandon his original intentions, the Hampstead property was bought for about £700. The additions to be made to it, John Romney calculated, would come to about £500 more. 'Thus I left him, and, as I flattered myself, extricated from a ruinous project. He was, however, unfortunately, under the influence of some worthless people, who profited by his imprudence. By them, and also by Mr. Hayley, he was still encouraged in the scheme of building. The house was a very good one, and convenient in all respects, with a very large garden pleasantly situated, and an excellent stable, coach-house, etc., above the garden, on the top of the hill. In 1797 and 1798, having pulled down the stable, etc., he built a new one upon some adjoining ground, which he had subsequently purchased; and upon the site of the old stable he raised a whimsical structure, consisting chiefly of a picture and statue gallery; but with few domestic accommodations: to this he also joined half the garden, in which he built a wooden arcade for a riding house. Hither he removed at Christmas, 1798, before the walls were dry, and let the old house at Hampstead for a rent which paid good interest for the original purchase money. The removal of his pictures, casts, etc. was attended with considerable expense; and for want of adequate room, the pictures were crammed into all vacant places, or arranged along the arcade, where, being exposed in the open air to the alternate action of moisture and frost, they were almost entirely destroyed in the course of the winter; several, also, were stolen. The expense of the new building amounted to two thousand, seven hundred, and thirty three pounds, besides many incidental charges of which there was no account. This structure and its appurtenances, when afterwards sold by auction, produced no more than three hundred and fifty seven pounds; and the old house, curtailed of the stables, and of so large a part of the garden, fetched a price equal to the original purchase money. Such was the unfortunate result of his building scheme.

'He sold the lease of his house in Cavendish Square to Mr. Shee, and superadded, as far as it was in his power to confer it, the *good will* also; and as a test of his *countenance*, sat to him for his portrait.

This picture, however, without any reflection upon that distinguished artist, was not a fair representation of his physiognomy; because it was taken at a time when he was oppressed with mental languor, and when his faculties were in some degree impaired. It does not give that keen and penetrating look, which formerly indicated the power of his genius, it only represents a mental ruin, made more conspicuous, perhaps, by the accuracy of the similitude.'[1]

The house Romney built is still in existence, and is now occupied by the Hampstead Constitutional Club. There are some good, large rooms remaining on the ground floor, including part of the gallery Romney built for his collection of casts, decorated with handsome columns. The bedroom accommodation was scanty, and the whole arrangement characteristic of the painter. The epithet 'whimsical' applied to it by his son was a just one. There was a lovely view from the upper windows in those days, embracing a panorama of London, the dome of St. Paul's, and the Thames Valley, which is now all shut out. According to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, the building, which is covered over with a kind of wooden boarding, has the appearance of a large stable, and, as a living house, must have been supremely uncomfortable.

The building of this extraordinary abode caused much comment among his fellow artists. J. T. Smith, in his *Nollekens and his Times*, says: 'It was to Hampstead that Hayley's friend, Romney the painter, retired in the decline of his life, when he built a dining-room close to his kitchen, with a buttery-hatch opening into it, so that he and his friends might enjoy beef-steaks, hot and hot, upon the same plan as the members of the Beef-steak Club are supplied at their room in the Lyceum.'

[1] John Romney, pp. 251-2.

XVIII

FROM the beginning of 1797 Romney's depression grew still more pronounced, and his few remaining years were more and more darkened by gradually increasing symptoms of mental decay. Hayley's son used to visit him as much as possible. 'He is so much alone,' he reported to his father, 'and sometimes so low spirited, that he takes it as a kindness in me to call and sit with him an hour or two.'

He was not continually plunged in gloom, however, and his intimate friends were always made welcome. Tom, in one of his letters, describes a dinner party at which he was present, when the guests included Flaxman, Adam Walker and two of his sons, Mr. Howard and Mr. Bunce. 'Mr. Romney was in high spirits and good humour.' Bunce was then at work, not only for the painter, but also on the plans for 'a singular original cottage, with turrets shooting up about fifteen or twenty feet above the roof,' which Hayley was about to build for himself at the seaside village of Felpham.

A few days later Tom dined again at Cavendish Square with William Meyer, and he tells of various tea-drinkings, and of evenings spent in copying from Romney's collection of casts.

Romney himself wrote more cheerfully to Hayley on March 17th, saying that he had sold his picture of the 'Indian Woman' for a good price. 'There is also a plan on foot to ornament St. Paul's with pictures and sculpture. Pray God it may succeed. What an opening for dear Tom. . . . I saw the Bishop of Llandaff yesterday, he expects us both at Calgarth Park in the summer.' Romney had painted the bishop's portrait; but for some reason or other the proposed visit was never paid. The 'Indian Woman' picture was the one already described which was purchased by Beckford for Fonthill.

In the same letter Romney refers to the sad death of his friend Hodges, the painter, for whom he had, at Hodges' own request, painted the small figure of Jaques, for which Hayley sat, in the landscape from *As You Like It* which the latter had done for the

MRS. STRATFORD CANNING AND HER DAUGHTER

IN THE COLLECTION OF LORD LEITH OF FYVIE

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LADY HAMILTON AS A NUN

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

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Shakespeare Gallery. 'Though,' says Hayley, 'the greater artist certainly worked with perfect good-will for his less prosperous brother, I cannot say that he worked happily on this occasion, for the figure, that he introduced appears not worthy of the landscape.' Hodges afterwards abandoned art for banking with disastrous results. The original study for the figure of Jaques, as already noted, was given by Romney to Tom Hayley.

Romney's health revived in some small degree during the spring. He went to Eartham on April 13th, and while there took part in the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the 'small marine villa' at Felpham, where Hayley afterwards resided. It took some persuasion to get him there. Tom wrote to his father on February 27th: 'I saw Mr. Romney yesterday, and read to him what you said. What a nervous creature he is! Sometimes he thinks he cannot go, and will not be well enough to move; and then again, he imagines it will be the best thing for his health.'

When Romney had at last made up his mind to start, it was found that Bunce could not get away for three weeks, and so the journey was once more postponed. 'I fly like a shuttlecock from Cavendish Square to Little Queen Street!' cries Tom in despair. They eventually arrived at Eartham unexpectedly at midnight on April 13th, the two elder men making the journey in a post-chaise which Romney had recently purchased, while their youthful companion rode the painter's pony all the way, and knocked himself up in doing so. The stone-laying ceremony took place two days later. They remained some weeks, and then returned as they came. 'After a warm ride I arrived in Cavendish Square sooner than usual,' writes Tom. 'While I was scribbling the few lines I sent you, Mr. Cumberland came in, by appointment, to eat a mutton chop with the painter.'

Romney went again to Sussex on June 29th, in order to take young Hayley home, as the boy was already suffering from the fatal malady from which he died shortly afterwards. On his return to London he wrote to Hayley, on July 12th—'I have been so much depressed in spirits, since I returned, that despair almost overturns me, and throws my building scheme almost to the ground.' He proposed to run down again to Eartham at the end of the following week 'to enjoy again the fine balsamic air of your country.'

He did so on August 7th, accompanied by the Rev. James Stanier Clarke. Bunce was also a visitor. Romney was not in a condition

to paint, so amused himself by sitting to Tom, who modelled his bust. 'It was a little less than life, a strong resemblance, a creditable work for so young an artist, and particularly successful in the great object of amusing and enlivening the friend, whose features it represented.' Between the 18th and 24th he made a short excursion with Clarke to the eastern side of the county. Shortly after their return to Eartham, as Hayley chronicles with pride, they had visits from the Duke of Richmond, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lord Thurlow on the same day. 'We have been honored by a curious trio of visiters to-day' (said Romney), 'grandeur! beauty! and genius! but all so much in their decline, that they now excite rather more pity, than admiration.' Words, adds Hayley, which at this time were very applicable to the painter himself.

He was, happily for himself, much occupied with his projected building. He had abandoned 'our very intelligent and honest architect,' Mr. Bunce, and was determined to give play to his own fancy. He ran up to London on September 6th, to give instructions to the workmen about the picture gallery, returning to Eartham on the 10th. Sea-bathing and riding had strengthened his nerves, so that, at the particular request of the Duke of Richmond, he now painted the portrait of Miss Le Clerc, who came to sit in the riding-house at Eartham. Lord Thurlow, who was residing at Bognor, was a constant visitor in September, as Tom, who had finished the bust of Romney, was then modelling the head of the Lord Chancellor.

During this visit Romney also began two historical pictures, representing the two Hayleys as Tobit and Tobias. The first, in which the youth prepares to heal the blindness of his father, was considerably advanced in both the figures. Romney took this back with him to London, meaning to finish it speedily, but never touched it again. The second sketch, 'in which Tobias looks with tender exultation on the restored eyes of the old man,' was little more than the hasty work of half-an-hour, but an excellent likeness of young Hayley, and was kept by his father. He worked at these two studies we are told, 'under the influence of a sudden and warm burst of joy and gratitude towards his friend of Eartham,' who had just succeeded in obtaining an assurance that a considerable sum of money which had long been owing to the artist should be promptly paid. The debtor was the Marquis of Donegal, who had recently died, and Romney had abandoned all hope of receiving his fees. The widowed Marchioness

was then staying at Felpham for the bathing, and was introduced to the Eartham party by Lord Thurlow. She readily promised Hayley that his friend should have the money. The poet and the painter breakfasted with her at her lodgings, and took her to see Hayley's Marine Villa, as he loved to call it. With all his faults, he was a man who never spared himself when he thought he could be of assistance to his friends.

This visit was to be, so both host and guest imagined, the last which Romney was to pay to Eartham. Hayley, who had never been of a saving disposition, had now to provide for a separate establishment for his wife, a woman somewhat given to extravagance and careless in matters of expenditure, so that he found it beyond his means to keep up Eartham properly;[1] and it was his intention to leave it as soon as the smaller house at Felpham was finished.

He thus moralises in his diary on the eve of Romney's departure for London: 'I close the month in paying the last attentions to my old infirm friend, as after cherishing him on this favourite spot for twenty-two years every autumn, I must now consign him to more opulent protectors. Having through life been highly attentive to the interest of my friends, and rather too careless of my own, I must try to correct my error, to preserve the evening of my day from indigence.' This plan of removal in the spring of 1798 had, however, to be postponed owing to the serious illness of his son.

Romney at this period of his life was not in all ways an ideal visitor. Hayley, writing to Tom after his departure, and speaking of the 'Tobias and Tobit' design, says: 'The more I look at it, the more I am delighted with the varied feelings that it most happily expresses; and had our dear Romney executed only this single rapid sketch, in the whole summer, he would have done enough to reward me for the vexation (great as it was) which I frequently endured from his mental infirmities. Heaven bless him and preserve him from the plagues that his fancy is often inclined to inflict upon himself.'

Romney, as was his wont, returned to town in more cheerful spirits, though deeply regretting that in all probability it was the last visit he was to pay to Eartham. This feeling he expressed in his letter of thanks—'I still look back with a tender regard for the peaceful shades of Eartham, and almost sigh for some of its social

[1] Mrs. Hayley, however, died toward the close of this year (1797).

walks, that probably I may never see more. Adieu, dear Eartham! and its inhabitants, adieu!'

At the beginning of 1798, he still maintained the improvement in both his health and spirits. Young Isaac Pocock was now a pupil in his house. Tom Hayley, too, had returned to Flaxman's studio, and found that Romney had 'acquired excellent spirits, by walking to, and from Hampstead, an exercise that does him more good than riding. He works now with spirit, and he has found his long lost picture of 'Cupid and Psyche,' which he is soon to finish.' He never did finish it. He had begun it years before, and it was a favourite design with him, and he had promised to complete it for William Long; but once again good resolutions came to nothing.[1]

One of the last pictures of any size with which he occupied himself was the portrait-group of Adam Walker and his family, already referred to, now in the National Portrait Gallery, which represents the philosopher, his wife and daughter seated at a table with a roll of papers spread in front of them, covered with a mathematical diagram which they are studying, while the three sons stand behind, the two elder engaged with a telescope, and the youngest looking down at his father. Romney felt himself unable to complete the work, and so sent it, a year or two later, in its unfinished state, with only the heads painted, to Walker, who had the draperies put in by another hand. In the letter of thanks he wrote to Romney, then in Kendal, he expressed his pleasure that his old friend should once more be united with his wife.

'My dear old Friend,' he wrote from Conduit Street, on January 27th, 1802, 'I have reproached myself these several months past for not writing to you, and particularly to thank you for your last most agreeable present, my family picture. I have got the draperies painted, and a handsome frame, so it is the great lion of my parlour. The next to it is 'King Lear and his Daughter,' which, now it is cleaned, looks almost as fresh as when I sat to you, with a gown on for its drapery, forty years since! I was very glad to hear by our friend Greene that you were in much better health than when you left London, and I hope you continue so. As to myself, I am as well as I have any right to expect in my seventieth year, and after the loss of one of the best of wives, a loss which I must lament to the last hour of my life, tho' I did everything to save her that change of air or place, advice, or money could do. Alas! in vain—and I feel even yet as if I wanted one of my arms, and I miss her wherever I go, or whatever I do! Tho' I have

[1] See pages 90 and 358.

lost a good wife, I rejoice, my dear friend, that you have regained a good one, and long may you be happy together.'

Among other works painted by Romney which Walker possessed, were the latter's own portrait, a small full length, in the style of the 'Jacob Morland' in the National Gallery, 'the first portrait Romney ever painted,' and the two battle-pieces, copied from prints, which Walker rescued from Steele's studio in Manchester, when that irresponsible person flitted away to Ireland leaving nothing but debts behind him.

Romney, who took much pleasure in befriending all young artists, grew very anxious about young Hayley's health, and begged his father to take him back to Sussex. This was at length done, and it was then discovered that he was suffering from curvature of the spine. It was hoped that he would recover, but through the earlier mistakes of the doctors in diagnosing the case, it was then too late to do more than prolong his life for a short time.

On April 18th, Romney, in writing to ask after the invalid, says, 'I hope summer will complete his recovery, and that I may see you and him the next winter upon the hill at Hampstead, where I hope to have my new mansion thoroughly dried, fit for your reception, and my gratification, as it is now in a very advanced state, and much to my liking. It will equal my most ardent expectation in every respect for beauty and convenience. . . . It will be very warm, and very convenient for every study. I really think it may be a desirable plan for dear Tom to come and stay for two or three months, and employ his masterly hand there after his recovery. . . . I have suffered much lately with relaxation and debility.'

He also adds that he intends to go to the north as soon as he can, for two or three months, 'which I hope will restore an enfeebled constitution,' and mentions Cockin, the arithmetician, who, 'has been ill of a slow fever ever since you left London.' This was the old friend of his youth, who had come from the north on purpose to look after Romney, with whom he took up his residence.

William Cockin, who was Romney's junior by two years, was born at Burton in Kendal in 1736, and was a teacher of writing and arithmetic in his younger days in several schools in London, and afterwards for twenty years at the Lancaster Grammar School, where he removed in 1764. On leaving Lancaster he taught for eight years at Mr. Blanchard's Academy in Nottingham, afterwards returning to his native town. He died in Romney's house at Kendal,

on May 30th, 1801, aged sixty-five, and was buried at Burton. He published a number of volumes in prose and verse on various subjects. His ode to Romney, written in 1767, has been mentioned already. In 1764 he published a *Rational and Practical Treatise of Arithmetic*, and in 1775, *The Art of delivering written Language*, which he dedicated to Garrick. Other works were an *Essay on the Doctrine of the Syphon*, *Ode to the Genius of the Lakes*, *The Fall of Scepticism and Infidelity predicted*, an epistle in verse addressed to Dr. Beattie, and *The Rural Sabbath*, a poem. 'He was deeply read in divinity,' says John Romney, 'and his practical conduct was consistent with his learning; for a more meek and benevolent creature never graced humanity. His virtues were almost without alloy. His elocution was mild and impressive, and he could talk on all subjects of literature and taste with great fluency and judgment.' He was a good friend, also, to Peter Romney, when the latter was left behind in Kendal after the elder brother had gone to seek his fortune in London, and carried on a correspondence with him which extended over several years.

Romney's health was now so bad that it allowed him to do little work, except occasional faint attempts to finish some of his neglected portraits. Hayley was in London in May, and found him looking well in outward appearance, but complaining of extreme weakness, which affected his mind. 'Few conditions in human existence appear more pitiable than that degree of weakness, produced by excessive application to a favorite study, when a man of a very active and enterprizing spirit, finds that his faculties are beginning to desert him. Such was the state of my unhappy friend at this time,' Hayley moralises. 'His mind was full of noble desires and intentions to form a little domestic academy, and improve himself in directing the studies of a few selected young friends and disciples. Had he entered on such a beneficent project earlier in life, he might possibly have produced much good; but he was now greatly enervated by that premature old age, which he had brought upon himself by excessive application to his art, and by the unwholesome custom of painting in a room immoderately hot. At present he suffered much from lassitude of body, and restlessness of mind; yet he looked forward, with some degree of hope, to expected seasons of more personal comfort and activity.'

Unable to work, Romney determined to pay a visit to his old home, for the first time during the course of thirty years. His son,

who had not seen him since 1796, followed him there. He found him more corpulent, and apparently more healthy; 'but this appearance was fallacious, and I soon perceived that the energy of his mind was impaired. He still, however, could take likenesses with great accuracy; but not having any oil colours with him, his attempts were only in crayons.' John Romney took him for a trip to the Lakes, to visit the scenes of his youth; 'but they did not seem to afford him that degree of gratification, which one might have expected in a man formerly so alive to the beauties of nature. I apprehend that he must already have experienced some slight paralytic affection, which, I have no doubt, took place while he was engaged with the picture of *The Temptation of Christ*, and which consequently put a stop to that grand design. In the following winter (1798), he complained of a swimming in his head, so that he could not see with precision, and was frequently rubbing the back of his hand, where he felt a numbness.' He then owned to his son that he had suffered something in the nature of a paralytic stroke, which was probably a second attack. We are not actually told that he stayed with his wife on this occasion, but it is evident that he did so.

He was back again in London in August, and spent part of September at Felpham with the Hayleys, where he took lodgings for himself. He found the young sculptor extremely ill, and unable to move from his sofa. Romney made no attempt to paint, and his host records that 'it was the only Autumn of the last twenty-three, in which I had the mortification of seeing Romney in a state of absolute manual inactivity, and mental discomfort.' He was so impatient to see his Hampstead house that he could not rest quietly in the country, but returned to London on September 11th. Here Hayley visited him shortly afterwards, and found him much dejected 'for want of occupation and society: I advised him to employ himself a little with his pencil, and offered to sit to him merely for his amusement. He began a head, the first attempt in his new painting room, and though his hand shook a little, yet he made a very creditable beginning, that pleased himself. The next morning he advanced his sketch more happily, as the very effort of beginning to work again, under the encouragement of an old friend, seemed to have done him good.'

'As we readily believe what we strongly wish,' he goes on to say, 'I was sanguine in my persuasion, that by exhorting Romney to fresh and fearless exercise of his pencil, I might render him the most

friendly service; but I am now inclined to think, there was more of kindness than of discretion, in that idea; whenever there is a perceptible decline, occasioned by age, in the mental and manual powers of a man, who has obtained celebrity in any art or profession, perhaps it should be the aim of sincere friendship to lead him, if his circumstances show it, to what Pope calls "the science of retreat."'

Hayley remained with him for a week or two, and did his best to interest and amuse him. He took him for a day's expedition to Kew, and escorted several people to Hampstead to see the 'Caro Pittore on his lofty hill,' including the two Misses Lushington, whom he calls the 'amiable young nymphs of the pencil.' 'Though our tender Romney suffers in his nervous system from the rainy weather,' he wrote to the invalid at Felpham, 'he was much pleased with his guests, and amused with the sketch-book of Augusta, the youngest, which I carried to him as an interesting proof of strong native talents. Such it appears to him and to Flaxman.' 'Isaac is an excellent youth,' he says in another letter, speaking of Pocock, 'and seems to promise highly for art. He is making large copies of the Milton and the Newton of our friend. Romney's own apartments in his lofty structure, are in excellent order, and he ought to be contented and happy; he talks of you with great kindness, and hopes yet to see you a great painter.' As one result of this visit Romney presented Hayley with the unfinished sketch of 'Serena reading the newspaper.'[1]

Romney was, after all, to pay one more visit to Eartham, to which house Tom Hayley had been removed from the milder air of Felpham. He went on February 7th, 1799, taking his pupil, Isaac Pocock, with him, and Hayley, of course, seized the opportunity of inditing a tedious sonnet in honour of his younger visitor. 'We all united our influence to reanimate the dejected Romney. He was inspirited by our united exhortations to such a degree, that he began a drawing of his two juvenile friends, one resting on the other, and to shew the fervency of his re-kindled spirit he made a fresh historical sketch from a scene in Macbeth.'[1] On the first of March, he began another portrait of himself, in spectacles, which he had finished by the 6th, and then returned to town on the following day with Pocock, declaring that the visit had done him much good.

He only remained in London a few months, however, and then, feeling the end approaching, turned at the last to the home he had abandoned so many years before. Hayley saw him for the last time at

[1] See page 127. [2] Hayley, page 293.

Hampstead on April 28th, when he 'had the grief of perceiving, that his increasing weakness of body, and mind, afforded only a gloomy prospect for the residue of his life.'

Almost the last word we have of him before he left London is contained in a letter from Flaxman to his pupil, then slowly dying at Eartham, dated July 5th, 1799: 'I and my father dined at Mr. Romney's at Hampstead, last Sunday, by particular invitation, and were received in the most cordial manner; but alas! I was grieved to see so noble a collection in a state so confused, so mangled, and prepared, I fear, for worse, and not better.' 'He soon afterwards retired to Kendal,' Hayley's narrative continues, 'where he had the comfort of finding an attentive affectionate nurse, in a most exemplary wife, who had never been irritated to an act of unkindness, or an expression of reproach, by his years of absence and neglect. His early and long estrangement from a virtuous partner and parent, so mild and meritorious, was the great error of his life; it appears the more pitiable as it proceeded originally from mistaken ideas of professional ambition, and it continued from that awkward pride, by which men of quick and apprehensive spirits are too frequently deterred from confessing and correcting their own misconduct.

'In his letters to me from Kendal my old friend did not fail to do full, though late, justice to the virtues of his excellent wife. He spoke of her kind attention with the tenderest gratitude, and professed himself as comfortable in her indulgent care of him, as with nerves so shaken he could expect to be. He informed me, that although obliged to renounce oil colours, he could sometimes amuse himself in sketching a portrait in crayons, and had pleased himself in purchasing a *pretty large estate* in that country.'

Romney was no longer able to hold a pen, and such letters as these were written for him by his old and faithful friend, Cockin, who had accompanied him to the North. He had now abandoned all hope of returning to live in his new mansion, and authorised his son to sell the Hampstead estate. At the same time he purchased some land at Whitestock Howe, near Newton-in-Cartmel, as some provision for his wife and son, and it was here that John Romney afterwards built Whitestock Hall, the house and property remaining in the family possession until 1901.

In 1800 young Hayley died, and in the following year Cockin also passed away. Once again before his own death Romney was to have news of Lady Hamilton. When this lady returned from Naples,

with the triumphant Nelson, she expressed, says Hayley, 'the most friendly solicitude concerning the health of our beloved artist, and an anxious wish concerning a portrait of herself, which he had most kindly intended to present to her mother.'

Hayley thereupon wrote as follows: 'Carissimo Pittore,—I receive infinite pleasure in finding from various reports of you that you seem to enjoy *ever rosy Health*, and I thank you for a kind letter in the hand of your friendly Secretary; it found me in London, where I have been pleased beyond Expression in receiving from our friend Lady Hamilton every mark of kind remembrance and cordial Friendship. She has charmed me, not only in singing to me in the kindest manner at different Times, but also in ever speaking of you in such terms of sincere Regard as would affect every Fibre of your Frame with tender Delight. She is, I think, more beautiful and more astonishing in Talent than ever. I have promised to remember her *most Kindly to you*, and I am persuaded you will thank me for telling you how you may gratify her in the highest Degree—by devoting to *her Mother* the Portrait of herself in a blue Hat, which I believe you have in your Hampstead Collection. I called at your Hampstead Door some Days ago to show a young lady (whom I call my Daughter) that interesting scene of art, but unluckily the servant was abroad, and of course we could gain no admission.

'I send you a ballad, which I have recently written for a charitable purpose, with decorations by our good enthusiastic Blake,[1] who is happily settled in that cottage at Felpham which you used to admire. Flaxman is as energetic as ever, and has now literally found a sweet Monument for our beloved Tom—whose loss I must ever feel with a mixture of awful exultation in a conviction of his present Beatitude. May we all meet happily in Heaven—such is the prayer of your affectionate Friend. London, Dec. 4.—Write me directly, as your Secretary is with you, and commission me, if you please, to find, and *present in your name*, the picture I have mentioned, to Lady Hamilton's mother, who is with her in London. Direct to me at Samuel Rose's, Esq., Chancery Lane.'

Samuel Rose was the young man who, in 1787, made Cowper's acquaintance, and afterwards became his close friend, taking the place

[1] '*A Series of Ballads* (*about Animals*). Chichester: Printed by J. Seagrave, for W. Blake, Felpham, 1802,' 4to, issued in four parts, in blue paper cover, with 14 engravings (including head and tail pieces) by Blake from his own designs.

of Unwin in his affections. He was the son of Mr. William Rose, a schoolmaster of Chiswick, and a writer in the *Monthly Review*. When Hayley obtained a pension of £300 a year for the poet through Lord Spencer, Lord Thurlow, Cowper's old schoolfellow, having failed him, Rose was appointed his trustee. He died in 1804 in his thirty-eighth year.

The portrait of Lady Hamilton in the blue hat was possibly the one sometimes called 'The Ambassadress,' now in the possession of Sir Robert Harvey, which has been already described.[1] Romney, in his reply to Hayley, dated Kendal, December 7th, 1800, said: 'What you say respecting Lady Hamilton gives me great pleasure indeed; if the picture, you mention, be at Hampstead, I shall be happy in gratifying her mother with it, and I trust you will take the trouble of conveying it to her in the properest manner.'

A few days later, Hayley succeeded in unearthing it from among a heap of discarded canvases and unfinished pictures, and wrote to Kendal to tell the painter how much the gift had delighted the fair Emma and Mrs. Cadogan. In his answer Romney said: 'The pleasure I should receive from a sight of the amiable Lady Hamilton, would be as salutary, as great; yet I fear, except I should enjoy more strength and better spirits at a better time of the year, I shall never be able to see London again; I feel every day greater need of care and attention, and here I experience them in the highest degree.'

By the beginning of 1801 he had, indeed, finally abandoned all hope of ever returning to his London studio, and on March 18th Messrs. Christie sold, by his instruction, 'the collection of castes from the antique, a very fine skeleton, and other artistic properties of George Romney, at his late residence, Hollybush Hill, Hampstead,' when the collection of reproductions of antique sculpture, upon which Flaxman had bestowed so much pains, was scattered in all directions.

In the last letter of all that he dictated to his most faithful correspondent, Romney announced that he had just received the good tidings that his brother, the Colonel, was coming home from India. 'The Colonel arrived indeed in time to see his generous fraternal patron alive, but the account, that the former gave me of their meeting, is such, as I can hardly write without a painful shudder of the heart. The invalide did not recollect the brother, whom he had so anxiously wished to see; on being asked if he did not know him, he looked eagerly in his face, burst into an agony of tears, that spoke his

[1] See page 167.

tender remembrance, and then immediately lost all recollection of his person and character. He remained for some time in that state of existence, which is infinitely more afflicting to the friends, who behold, than to the mortal, who endures it.'[1]

'It would be desirable,' says his son, in speaking of the end, 'to throw a veil over the closing years of his life, and hide the infirmities of human nature. . . . Reason . . . became entirely extinct before the dissolution of the body; and he departed from life mentally the same as when he came into existence. However distressing his case was to those about him, it is a consolation to think, that he was unconscious of his situation, and never suffered any bodily pain whatever. He died November 15th, 1802, when he had nearly completed his sixty eighth year. As his sole ambition was to excel in his art, he never aspired to any other distinction. He never sought to be admitted into any Society, and had no desire to affix titles to his name. The habits of his whole life were simple, and unostentatious; and like them, also, were the circumstances connected with his death, which were, in every respect, a contrast to those of his more fortunate contemporaries; who were honoured with public funerals, had their bodies deposited in St. Paul's, and monuments or statues erected to their fame; while the canopy of heaven is the dome of his Mausoleum, and the green grass which fringes his gravestone, the only ornament of his tomb.'

News travelled slowly in those days, and Hayley did not hear of his death until November 30th, when he wrote in his diary:—

'Rode alone to Lavant—surprized and shocked there by unexpected tidings, in the newspaper, of my dear old friend Romney's death, at Kendal; my feelings concerning him made the morning a very distressing one to me. Heaven bless my departed old friend!

"Peace to his ashes! to his memory fame!"'

The poet rose at dawn on the following day and began the composition of an epitaph, over which he took unusual pains, 'wishing to make it like one of Romney's happiest portraits, just, forcible, and tender.'

He was buried at Dalton, on November the 19th, 1802. His son wished to erect a simple memorial to him in Dalton Church; but met with a curt rebuff from Lord George Cavendish, the owner of the only part of the wall of the building against which it was possible to place it. John Romney never fathomed the motives which lay behind this refusal—more especially as Lady Elizabeth Cavendish had sat to the

[1] Hayley, page 298.

LADY HAMILTON

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. F. C. ARKWRIGHT

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LADY HAMILTON AS EUPHROSYNE

UNFINISHED STUDY

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. G. HARLAND PECK

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painter at a time when Lord George was paying his addresses to her, and had himself attended some of the sittings. Reynolds also painted a fine full-length of her, when Lady Elizabeth Compton,[1] and there is a good group by Hoppner, in which she is shown with her two boys and her little girl. The desired wall-space was afterwards used for the erection of a florid monument to Lord George's steward, and John Romney infers that he had incurred this attorney's enmity by paying no particular court to him.

In the end, the monument, a simple one of black marble, was taken back to Kendal and there erected in the parish church, as a cenotaph, which bears the following words:—'To the memory of George Romney, Esquire, the celebrated painter, who died at Kendal the 15th of November 1802, and was interred at Dalton, the place of his birth. So long as genius and talent shall be respected, his name will live.'

His grave at Dalton was marked only by a stone, which was replaced by his eldest great-grandson, Mr. J. O. Romney, in 1895, by a new one made of limestone from the neighbouring village of Stainton, upon which is inscribed:—

'GEORGIUS ROMNEY, ARMIGER,
PICTOR CELEBERRIMUS,
OBIIT 15TH NOVEMBER 1802.'

His wife, who survived him for twenty-one years, lived to the great age of ninety-six, and was buried in the churchyard at Rusland, near Whitestock. During the latter years of her life she resided at Whitestock Cottage, an older building than Whitestock Hall, where she died on April 20th, 1823. An old family servant, who was nurse to both John Romney's children and grandchildren, and who died not many years ago, retained a vivid recollection of the old lady during her last years, and used to say that her temper was bad.

John Romney, the artist's only son, was born at Kendal on April 6th, 1757, and lived there with his mother for the first six years of his life. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School, and afterwards at Cambridge. He took holy orders in 1782, and became a Fellow of St. John's three years later. Shortly after his father's death he filled curacies in Norfolk, but settled at Whitestock Hall in 1806, in which year the house was finished. The title-deeds of the estate are in the name of the artist, but the building was carried out by the son, who was his own architect. An illustration of it was given in *Black and*

[1] See page 326.

White for June 2nd, 1894, which shows it to be a mansion of considerable size. In the same year, 1806, he married Miss Jane Kennall, of Kendal, a distant cousin, who died in 1862. He remained in the north until his death on February 6th, 1832, and left a family of two sons and three daughters. Until some thirty-five years ago the family possessed a certain amount of property in the neighbourhood, most of which, if not all, had belonged to the Rev. John Romney, part of it inherited from his father, and part purchased by himself. This was sold by his son when Barrow grew into a busy manufacturing town. John Romney was buried at Rusland, near his mother, two of his daughters and his son John. The latter also entered the church, though, according to Sir Herbert Maxwell, he had more renown locally as a sportsman than a divine.

The Rev. John Romney's eldest daughter, Mary, became Mrs. Rawlinson, of Graythwaite, near Lake Side, Windermere, about three miles from Whitestock. George Romney painted several members of the Rawlinson family at Lancaster. Three of these are now in the possession of Mr. Walker, of Bretargh Holt, near Kendal, and two of them are reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book. These are fine examples of his early work, and represent Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Rawlinson, of Lancaster.[1] Another good picture of his pre-Italian days is the group of 'Mr. and Mrs. Lindow,' in the National Gallery, the lady being their niece, a daughter of Mr. Abram Rawlinson.

John Romney's son succeeded to Whitestock in 1832, and his grandson in 1875. After some years the latter became involved in monetary difficulties, and his two surviving aunts, Miss Elizabeth Romney, and Mrs. Brooks, took over Whitestock Hall from him, moving there from Coniston. The house was full of pictures, sketches, engravings, and other memorials of the painter, which the Rev. John Romney had inherited from his father. In addition to these, Miss Romney brought with her from Coniston a few good Romney pictures, which she had bought from time to time. Mrs. Brooks died in 1889, and Miss Romney in 1893. On the 24th and 25th of May, in the following year, her collection was sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson and Woods. The statement that she inherited it from her father is incorrect.

The sale attracted much attention, for the catalogue contained many interesting pictures, drawings, sketches, and engravings, with a number of autograph letters to and from the painter, many of his

[1] See page 284.

sketch-books, and an almost complete set of the pocket-books in which he kept a list of his professional engagements. Among the pictures were some of his earliest works, such as the 'King Lear in the Storm,' painted in 1760, and exhibited three years later at the Free Society of Artists, which was knocked down for a guinea; the 'Memory of Windermere' (22 guineas); his two studies, made in Rome, of a dwarf and a bravo (5½ guineas); a portrait of James Romney, holding a candle between his hand and face (21 guineas); a crayon portrait of his son (6½ guineas); a small oval portrait of his brother James, in water-colours (23 guineas); portraits of James and Peter Romney, exhibited under the title of 'A Conversation' at the Free Society of Artists in 1766 (70 guineas); and an early portrait of his wife (32 guineas).

There were also a number of pictures representing his powers at their maturity, some of which have been already described, such as 'Titania, Puck, and the Changeling, on the Sea-shore,' painted about 1793, which was bought for 205 guineas for the National Gallery of Ireland; and the well-known 'Portrait of the Artist,' painted at Eartham in 1782, which was secured for 420 guineas for the National Portrait Gallery. A version of 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante, leading a goat,' said in the catalogue to have been painted probably about 1792, fetched 300 guineas, and one of the two pictures of her in the same character, dancing on a heath, of about the same date, a nearly full length life-size figure, 600 guineas. This was the picture exhibited at the Liverpool Arts Club in 1881. 'Mrs. Tickell (Miss Ley)' from the 1807 sale, brought 1150 guineas; 'Mrs. Billington as St. Cecilia,' seated by a piano, in a white dress, painted in 1787, also exhibited at Liverpool in 1881, 900 guineas—it was included in John Romney's sale in 1834, and repurchased by Miss Romney in 1875; 'Mrs. Inchbald,' in white dress and cap, blue sash and powdered hair, now belonging to Sir Edward Tennant, 950 guineas; and 'Master John Thomas Paine,' with a Pomeranian dog, signed and dated 1776, and engraved by J. Dean, 800 guineas. Several canvases of less importance, such as the 'Mrs. Crouch,' and 'Joan of Arc,' had been acquired by Miss Romney from the collection of J. H. Anderdon. Other portraits of the artist himself were included in the sale, one in which he is wearing a black coat and his hair in powder, at about the age of thirty-five, and another, painted about 1795, when an old man; also 'Colonel James Romney,' in uniform, which is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, and the portrait of the 'Rev. John Romney,' painted in two sittings in 1794.

One of the most interesting lots was No. 197, a screen of five panels, each about six feet by two feet, with the title, 'The Singers go before, the Minstrels follow after; in the midst are the Damsels playing with Timbrels.' The figures are about three feet high, and are set in a landscape background in which the sky predominates. One of the panels was painted by John Romney, and the others are probably more or less the work of pupils from Romney's designs.

It may be of interest to give here a brief account of the earlier Romney sales. On May 22nd and 23rd, 1805, the 'Intire and Genuine collection of Prints, Books of Prints, and Drawings of George Romney, Esq., Historical and Portrait Painter, deceased,' was sold by 'Mr. T. Philipe, at his Rooms, Warwick Street, Golden Square, adjoining the Chapel.' This was the collection formed by the artist of several thousands of prints, etchings, and drawings of the Italian, Dutch, Flemish, French, and other Schools, but containing no original works of his own.

The first sale of his pictures, held in 1807, must have been very disappointing to the Rev. John Romney, as the greater number of the canvases fetched such ridiculously small sums that they may be said to have been given away. It is true that most of them were unfinished portraits, and studies and cartoons for historical works carried but a little way towards completion, but even then it is astonishing that they should have been knocked down in some cases for a few shillings, in others for merely a pound or two. The purchasers, in many instances. were fellow-artists, such as John Hoppner and Tresham. The title-page of the sale-catalogue was as follows:—'A | Catalogue | of | The Select and Reserved Collection | of | Paintings | of | That eminent and very celebrated artist, | George Romney Esq. R.A. | Deceased:| consisting of | The most admired Productions of his Pencil | particularly | His large Copy from the Transfiguration of | Raffaelle; Sir Isaac Newton making Experiments | on the Prism; King Lear; the Dying | Damsel, in the Ballad, *'Twas when the Seas | were roaring;* Miss Wallis as Mirth and | Melancholy; and many other Fancy Pieces, | and Portraits of celebrated Characters. | which | will be sold by Auction | By Mr. Christie | At His Great Room, Pall Mall | On Monday, April 27, 1807, | At Twelve O'Clock.' The 'R. A.' was, of course, a mistake on the part of the auctioneer.

The first thirty-three lots consisted, with one exception, of portraits,

all of which, judging by the prices they produced, must have been mere beginnings or canvases put aside by the painter as unsatisfactory. For instance, a portrait of Lady Holte, evidently a discarded study for the fine portrait in the Birmingham Art Gallery, was purchased for five shillings, and one of 'Mr. Tickel the Poet' for seven shillings, while the 'Portraits of a Barrister and one other unknown,' went for eight shillings for the two, and a 'Portrait of Perdita (Mrs. Robinson)' was knocked down for sixteen shillings. This last was not the beautiful canvas now in the Wallace Collection; the latter was No. 72 in the sale, and was bought in for John Romney by Saunders, Romney's frame maker, for nineteen guineas. Slightly better prices were obtained for 'Mrs. Siddons' (£4, 6s.); 'Children—painted for the late Countess of Derby' (£3, 15s.); 'Lady Hamilton' (£10, 10s.); 'Miss Pitt—*very spirited*' (£5, 10s.) and 'Dr. Markham, the present Archbishop of York—*notwithstanding the great merit which this Portrait possesses, Mr. Romney desirous of rendering justice to this venerable Character, undertook a second Picture, upon which he bestowed still greater care; and it was deemed the finest of his works*'(£4, 14s. 6d.).

Lots 34 to 52 were small studies for 'Fancy Subjects' and Cartoons, a number of which were studies for 'The Tempest' picture, and several for the 'Birth of Shakespeare.' These fetched prices ranging from five shillings to £5, 10s., the latter sum being given for No. 36, 'A boy, seated, Study for the education of Shakespeare.' Among them was the large 'Jupiter Pluvius,' so christened by John Romney (see page 70), which only realised twelve shillings.

Lot 53 was the large study, made in Rome with so much care and trouble, of the lower half of Raphael's 'Transfiguration,' which was given away at six guineas; and four oil sketches after 'The Passion of Christ,' by Baroccio only obtained a bid of £4, 6s. Lots 55 to 72 were portraits, many of them full lengths, several of which went for sums of five shillings or half a guinea. A whole length of Mrs. Forster, as Circe, was bought in at £1, 10s., while a more finished example of the same subject went for £3, 3s. 'Mrs. Tickel' brought £4, 4s., and the head of a 'Lady as Euphrosyne,' £5, 5s. Better prices were given for a whole-length of Lady Hamilton as Cassandra (£8, 8s.) and for 'Mrs. Smith Sewing' (£15, 15s.).

Further Fancy and Historical subjects followed, a few by other artists, the prices ranging from eleven shillings for a 'Head of St. Peter,' by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to £6, 16s. 6d. for 'A Pietà by Caravaggio, original and fine.' Among them were the 'Five Leaves of a Screen,

Dancing Nymphs' (£5, 5s.), which has been mentioned already in connection with Miss Romney's sale in 1894.

The more finished works were reserved for the end of the catalogue. The 'Portrait of Lady Hamilton as Circe, whole length, very elegant,' was knocked down to Mr. Long for £15, 4s. 6d. Others which may be singled out were 'A Group of Children in a Boat Drifting out to Sea, their Nurse on the Beach in Distress, an Interesting Sketch' (£4, 14s. 6d); 'A fine Study for the Titania, Changeling and Puck, richly coloured' (£12, 12s.); 'Titania Reposing, unfinished, an elegant and poetical Study' (£12, 12s.); 'Lady Hamilton as the Pythian Priestess, seated on the Tripod, an elegant Study' (£13, 13s.); 'Portrait of Mrs. Crouch, a highly finished and pleasing picture' (£5, 15s. 6d.); and a 'Whole length finished Portrait of Lady Hamilton as Iphigenia with a Yellow Veil' (£12, 1s. 6d.).

Most of the best things were bought in by the painter's son. Among these were 'A Bacchante' (£21, 10s. 6d.), evidently the picture of 'Lady Hamilton leading a Goat' (see pages 114 and 313); 'Titania concealing herself, a Sketch' (£12, 1s. 6d.); 'Penitence, an elegant and high finished Picture' (£38, 17s.), and 'Absence, the Companion' (£47, 5s.); 'Portrait of Mrs. Billington' (£8, 18s. 6d.); 'The much admired picture—"Mirth and Melancholy" the Portraits, from Miss Wallis, exhibit the same countenance with a different expression. They were designed to shew the equal degree of excellence of that late accomplished Actress in either walk of the Drama. In the distance is a richly coloured landscape' (£52, 10s.);[1] 'Ophelia, leaning over Water, supported upon the Branch of a Tree; Ruined Buildings and Romantic Scenery in the Back Ground' (£18, 18s.); 'The Heath Scene, with Gloster, Kent, Edgar, Lear, and Fool, from Shakespear's King Lear, very spirited' (£37, 16s.): 'A Subject from the well-known Ballad—"'Twas when the seas were Roaring"—a despondent Female seated upon a Rock, overpowered with Grief; a Gleam of Light is thrown upon the Breast and Arms of the Female with richest effect' (£30, 9s.)—several studies for this picture of varying size, called 'Solitude,' were included in the sale; and 'Sir Isaac Newton contemplating the Phaenomenon of the refraction of Rays by the Prism. The Painter has treated the Subject as a Scene from Real Domestic Life; and has introduced a Female bringing a Caraff of Water, and another expressing her Ignorant Delight at the effect produced; the Subject is treated with Ability and Science; the Colouring rich and

[1] See pages 155 and 204.

harmonious' (£42). The last lot was No. 119, 'Titania, the Changeling and Puck on a Sea Shore, unfinished; a surprising Picture of Poetical Sportive Invention, treated with Corregiesque taste and magic effect, one of the happiest efforts of the Artist' (£68, 5s.). This is the picture now in the National Gallery of Ireland; a slighter study, mentioned above, was included in the sale.

This sale was far from a monetary success. John Romney bought in pictures to the value of £406, 19s. 6d., while the total amount realised by those canvases actually sold was £307, 1s., which when commissions and duty had been deducted, was reduced to £250, 16s.

The sale on May 9th and 10th, 1834, after John Romney's death, by Messrs. Christie, Manson and Christie, was announced as 'The Collection of Pictures reserved after the death of that Celebrated and elegant Painter, Romney, as some of the most capital of his productions, by his son, the Rev. John Romney, deceased, in pursuance of whose Will they are now sold.' The pictures were sold on the second day, Lots 72 to 92, and as they consisted almost entirely of those bought in in 1807 there is no need to recapitulate them. Among them were a few of his Roman life-studies, which reappeared in Miss Romney's sale in 1894. These, with several of the more important works, such as 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante,' 'King Lear,' and the portrait of Mrs. Billington, were again bought in. The 'Mirth and Melancholy' was purchased by Lord Egremont, and is now at Petworth. The earlier lots, Nos. 39 to 71, consisted of a collection of 'Old Masters,' formed by the painter and considerably added to by his son. They included 'Rembrandt's portrait of Himself, which belonged for many years to Sir Joshua,' which figured in the 1807 Sale as 'Head of St. Peter, Sir Joshua.' Other names included in the list were Raphael, Titian, Paul Veronese, Rubens, Poussin, Murillo, and Van Dyck, but in all probability the greater number of the works attributed to them were merely school-pieces.

XIX

A SHORT and very inadequate biographical sketch of Romney's career, containing more than one serious mistake, was published in the supplement to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1802. This was followed, in June 1803, by a longer and much more adequate account of the artist, from the pen of Richard Cumberland, which filled seven pages of *The European Magazine*. This again was by no means free from inaccuracies, but it was the first attempt made to do anything like justice to Romney's genius or to appreciate the real character of the man. In the latter respect it gave offence to both Hayley and John Romney, though, as a whole, it was a fair and just estimate of Romney's character, if not of his art.

It was well known in literary and artistic circles that Hayley intended to publish a life of his friend, and it is at Hayley that Cumberland aims in his opening sentences. 'Although the works of Mr. George Romney will continue to bear testimony to his excellence in Art as long as their canvasses and colours shall endure,' he begins, 'yet it does not seem right that he should descend to the grave with no other memorials of his fame, whilst there are friends still surviving, who have something to relate of him in a language which those existing samples of his genius cannot speak. He was a man too great to be consigned to oblivion; but the task of doing justice to his abilities is not a light one. Some, who were numbered amongst his intimates, are fully able to perform it; and no one, who was happy in his friendship, more truly laments their indolence than the writer of these memoirs, who, without their powers, and possibly without their leisure, submits to the call of those who have pressed the undertaking upon him,[1] and will too probably, in the result, discover, that they have been the projectors of their own disappointment.'

As barely six months had elapsed since Romney's death, this was a little unfair to Hayley. The latter, however, was singularly tardy in

[1] In his *Memoirs* Cumberland states that he only undertook it at the earnest solicitation of Thomas Greene, William Long, and Daniel Braithwaite.

LADY HAMILTON AS "A CHILD"

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

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ELIZABETH, LADY FORBES

IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR DUNCAN HAY, BT.

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beginning his self-appointed task, for which he had been collecting materials for years. He allowed a year to elapse before he made a beginning, as he tells us in his own *Memoirs*, though in his preface to the *Life* itself, he states that the introduction and a considerable part of the book were written in 1803.

Throughout 1804 he was so absorbed in his *Life* of Cowper, that all other work was put on one side, though Colonel James Romney paid him a visit, and promised him his assistance; but the death of the latter deprived him of this valuable source of information. He also enlisted the services of William Blake in the collecting of materials for the book from Romney's old friends. Blake thought very highly of Romney as an imaginative painter, while Flaxman, Fuseli, and Romney himself were all admirers of Blake's designs, so that Hayley's choice of a helper was a wise one.

Mr. Archibald Russell, in his recently published *Letters of William Blake*,[1] says: 'It will appear from many of Blake's letters that the admiration evinced by Romney was fully reciprocated, especially in the case of the various historical studies and cartoons which were undertaken by the latter at this period. These have even left a visible mark upon Blake's style. An India-ink drawing done about the date of this meeting, entitled "Har and Heva bathing: Mnetha looking on," (one of a set of twelve illustrations to his own poem *Tiriel*), is a good example of the Romney influence, which is clearly distinguishable in the curves of the figures, in the breadth of the light effects, and in the character of the forest background; and from the designs of the latter from "Shakespeare" and "Milton" it is sufficiently clear that the gain was not on Blake's side alone. I have even identified a sketch by Romney from *Paradise Lost* having Blake's signature forged upon it.'

A number of interesting letters which Blake addressed to the poet with reference to the illustrations for the book are printed in Alexander Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*, and also by Mr. Russell. These, in their turn, show how high an admiration Blake had for the older painter, and as they refer to many of Romney's designs, some extracts from them may be given here. Blake wrote to Hayley on October 26th, 1803:—'I have been with Mr. Sanders,[2] who has now in his possession all Mr. Romney's pictures that remained after

[1] *The Letters of William Blake, together with His Life by F. Tatham*, edited by A. G. B. Russell, 1906.

[2] Romney's framemaker.

the sale at Hampstead; I saw "Milton and his Daughters," and "'Twas where the Seas were Roaring," and a beautiful Female Head. He has promised to write a list of all that he has in his possession, and of all that he remembers of Mr. Romney's paintings, with notices where they now are, as far as his recollection will serve. The picture of "Christ in the Desert" he supposes to be one of those which he has rolled on large rollers. He will take them down and unroll them, but cannot do it easily, as they are so large as to occupy the whole length of his workshop, and are laid across beams at the top. Mr. Flaxman is now out of town. When he returns I will lose no time in setting him to work on the same object. . . . I go on finishing Romney with spirit.' Blake was then at work upon an engraving of a portrait of the artist as an illustration to the book, but for some reason it was never used.

Next comes a letter from Flaxman to Hayley, written on January 2nd, 1804:—'I wonder, my good friend, as you admired the genius of Romney so much, that you do not remember the whole catalogue of his chalk cartoons; as I think it was your opinion, in common with other sufficient judges, that they were the noblest of his studies. Besides, they were but few in number. The following were the subjects: "A Lapland Witch raising a Storm," "Charity and her Children," "Pliny and his Mother flying from the Eruption of Vesuvius"; the following from Aeschylus: "Raising the Ghost of Darius," "Atossa's Dream"; "The Furies." I hope they exist in a perfect state; and if they do, they are all well worth etching in a bold manner, which I think Blake is likely to do with great success, and perhaps at an expense which will not be burthensome. But, at any rate, give him one to do first for a trial. The exhibition of a painter's noblest sentiments and grandest thoughts must certainly become as striking and interesting in his life as their several poems in the lives of Milton, Homer, or Virgil. I am glad you are satisfied with the introduction; in this you have had the success of a friend both zealous and skilful. I confess, great as my regard was for the man, to write his life and speak the truth without offence seems attended with considerable difficulty. I am not at all surprised that many passages in this eminent man's letters were truly eloquent and beautiful. Indeed I should have been confounded had they not been so; because whatever advantages education can bestow, they are but so many modifications of the light of the understanding and the feelings and affections of the heart. I am sure Romney's memory will want no

grace or decoration which your pen cannot give, and therefore any effort of mine would be comparatively poor and tedious, like "the shuffling gait of a tired nag." Yet I am not so churlish that I would not lend an endeavour, however weak, to honour a departed friend; but even this must be independent, and not comparative. I do not remember Mr. Robinson, but I rejoice in his success and the inspiration of his son.'

Further letters from Blake show that he was anxious to do everything in his power to help forward the work. He wrote on January 27th, 1804:—'I am now so well, thank God, as to get out, and have accordingly been to Mr. Walker, who is not in town, being at Birmingham, where he will remain six weeks or two months. I took my portrait of Romney as you desired, to show him. His son was likewise not at home, but I will again call on Mr. Walker, Jun., and beg him to show me the pictures and make every inquiry of him, if you think best. Mr. Sanders has one or two large cartoons. The subject he does not know. They are folded up on the top of his workshop: the rest he packed up and sent into the north. I showed your letter to Mr. John Romney to Mr. Flaxman, who was perfectly satisfied with it. I sealed and sent it immediately, as directed by Mr. Sanders, to Kendall, Westmoreland. Mr. Sanders expects Mr. Romney in town soon. . . . Mr. Flaxman is not at all aquainted with Sir Alan Chambrè; recommends me to inquire concerning him of Mr. Rose. My brother says he believes Sir Alan is a Master in Chancery. Tho' I have called on Mr. Edwards twice for Lady Hamilton's direction, was so unfortunate as to find him out both times; I will repeat my call on him to-morrow morning.'

'*February* 23*rd*, 1804.—I called yesterday on Mr. Braithwaite, as you desired, and found him quite as cheerful as you describe him, and by his appearance should not have supposed him to be near sixty, notwithstanding he was shaded by a green shade over his eyes. He gives a very spirited assurance of Mr. John Romney's interesting himself in the great object of his father's fame, and thinks that he must be proud of such a work in such hands. As to the picture from Sterne, which you desired him to procure for you, he has not yet found where it is; supposes that it may be in the north, and that he may learn from Mr. Romney, who will be in town soon. Mr. B. desires I will present his compliments to you, and write you that he has spoken with Mr. Read concerning the *Life of Romney*. He interests himself in it, and has promis'd to procure dates of premiums, pictures,

etc., Mr. Read having a number of articles relating to Romney, either written or printed, which he promises to copy out for your use, as also the Catalogue of Hampstead sale. He showed me a very fine portrait of Mrs. Siddons, by Romney, as the Tragic Muse; half length, that is, the head and hands, and in his best style. He also desires me to express to you his wish that you would give the public an engraving of that medallion by your son's matchless hand, which is placed over his chimney-piece. . . . He says that it is by far, in his opinion, the most exact resemblance of Romney he ever saw. I have, furthermore, the pleasure of informing you that he knew immediately my portrait of Romney, and assured me that he thought it a very great likeness. . . . Neither Mr. Flaxman nor Mr. Edwards know Lady Hamilton's address. The house which Sir William lived in, in Piccadilly, she left some time ago. . . . Mrs. Flaxman and her sister give also their testimony to my likeness of Romney.'

'*April 2nd*, 1804.—Mr. Flaxman advises that the drawing of Mr. Romney's which shall be chosen instead of "The Witch" (if that cannot be recovered), be "Hecate," the figure with the torch and snake, which he thinks one of the finest drawings. . . . I have now cleared the way to Romney, in whose service I now enter again with great pleasure, and hope soon to show you my zeal with good effect.'

'*April 27th*, 1804.—Engraving is of so slow process, I must beg of you to give me the earliest possible notice of what engraving is to be done for the *Life of Romney*. Endless work is the true title of engraving, as I find by the things I have in hand day and night.'

'*May 4th*, 1804.—I have seen the elder Mr. Walker. He knew and admired without any preface my print of Romney, and when his daughter came in he gave the print into her hand without a word, and she immediately said, "Ah! Romney! younger than I knew him, *but very like indeed.*" Mr. Walker showed me Romney's first attempt at oil painting; it is a copy from a Dutch picture,—"Dutch Boor Smoking"; on the back is written, "This was the first attempt at oil painting by G. Romney." He shewed me also the last performance of Romney. It is of Mr. Walker and family, the draperies put in by somebody else. It is a very excellent picture, but unfinished. The figures as large as life, half length; Mr. W., three sons, and, I believe, two daughters, with maps, instruments, etc. Mr. Walker also showed me a portrait of himself, (W.), whole length, on a canvas about two feet by one and a half; it is the first portrait Romney ever painted.

But above all, a picture of "Lear and Cordelia," when he awakes and knows her,—an incomparable production, which Mr. W. bought for five shillings at a broker's shop. It is about five feet by four, and exquisite for expression; indeed, it is most pathetic. The heads of Lear and Cordelia can never be surpassed, and Kent and the other attendant are admirable. The picture is very highly finished. Other things I saw of Romney's first works: two copies, perhaps from Borgognone, of battles; and Mr. Walker promises to collect all he can of information for you. I much admired his mild and gentle benevolent manners; it seems as if all Romney's intimate friends are truly amiable and feeling like himself.

'I have also seen Alderman Boydell, who has promised to get the number and prices of all Romney's prints as you desired. He has sent a catalogue of all his collection, and a scheme of his lottery. . . . Mr. Flaxman agrees with me that somewhat more than outline is necessary to the execution of Romney's designs, because his merit is eminent in the art of massing his lights and shades. I should propose to etch them in a rapid but firm manner, somewhat, perhaps, as I did the "Head of Euler"; the price I receive for engraving Flaxman's outlines of *Homer* is five guineas each. . . . I mentioned the pictures from Sterne to Mr. Walker. He says that there were several; one, a garden scene, with Uncle Toby and Obadiah planting in the garden; but that of "Le Fèvre's Death," he speaks of as incomparable, but cannot tell where it now is, as they were scattered abroad, being disposed of by means of a raffle. He supposes it is in Westmoreland; promises to make every inquiry about it.'

'*May 28th*, 1804.—I have delivered the letter to Mr. Edwards, who will give it immediately to Lady Hamilton. Mr. Walker I have again seen; he promises to collect numerous particulars concerning Romney, and send them to you; wonders he has not had a line from you; desires me to assure you of his wish to give every information in his power. Says that I shall have "Lear and Cordelia" to copy if you desire it should be done. Supposes that Romney was about eighteen when he painted it; it is therefore doubly interesting. Mr. Walker is truly an amiable man; spoke of Mr. Greene as the oldest friend of Romney, who knew most concerning him of any one; lamented the little difference that subsisted between you, speaking of you both with great affection. Mr. Flaxman has also promised to write all he knows or can collect concerning Romney, and send to you. Mr. Sanders has promised to write to Mr. J. Romney immediately, desiring him to give us liberty to copy

any of his father's designs that Mr. Flaxman may select for that purpose; doubts not at all of Mr. Romney's readiness to send any of the cartoons to London you desire; if this can be done it will be all that could be wished. I spoke to Mr. Flaxman about choosing out proper subjects for our purpose; he has promised to do so. I hope soon to send you Flaxman's advice upon this article. . . . *P.S.* Mr. Walker says that Mr. Cumberland is right in his reckonings of Romney's age. Mr. W. says Romney was two years older than himself, consequently was born in 1734. Mr. Flaxman told me that Mr. Romney was three years in Italy; that he returned twenty-eight years since. Mr. Humphry, the painter, was in Italy the same time with Mr. Romney. Mr. Romney lodged at Mr. Richter's, Great Newport Street, before he went; took the house in Cavendish Square immediately on his return; but as Flaxman has promised to put pen to paper, you may expect a full account of all he can collect. Mr. Sanders does not know the time when Mr. R. took or left Cavendish Square house.'

'22*nd June*, 1804.—I have got the three sublime designs of Romney now in my lodgings, and find them all too grand as well as too undefined for mere outlines; and indeed it is not only my opinion but that of Mr. Flaxman and Mr. Parker, both of whom I have consulted, that to give a true idea of Romney's genius, nothing less than some finished engravings will do, as outline entirely omits his chief beauties; but there are some which may be executed in a slighter manner than others, and Mr. Parker, whose eminence as an engraver makes his opinion deserve notice, has advised that four should be done in the highly finished manner, and four in a less finished; . . . It is certain that the pictures deserve to be engraved by the hands of angels, and must not by any means be done in a careless or too hasty manner. . . . Mr. Flaxman advises that the best engravers should be engaged in the work, as its magnitude demands all the talents that can be procured.

'Mr. Flaxman named the following eight as proper subjects for prints:—

I. "The Vision of Atossa" from Aeschylus.
II. "Apparition of Darius."
III. "Black-eyed Susan," a figure on the sea shore embracing a corse.
IV. "The Shipwreck," with the man on horse-back, and which I have.
V. "Hecate," a very fine thing indeed, which I have.
VI. "Pliny": very fine, but very unfinished, which I have.

VII. "Lear and Cordelia," belonging to Mr. Walker.

VIII. "One other which I omitted to write down and have forgot, but think that it was a figure with children, which he called "Charity."

'I write immediately on receiving the above information, because no time should be lost in this truly interesting business. . . . My "Head of Romney" is in very great forwardness. Parker commends it highly, Flaxman has not yet seen it, but shall soon, and then you shall have a proof of it for your remarks also. I hope by this time Flaxman has written to you, and that you will soon receive such documents as will enable you to decide on what is to be done in our desirable and arduous task of doing justice to our admired, sublime Romney. I have not yet been able to meet Mr. Braithwaite at home, but intend very soon to call again, and (as you wish) to write all I can collect from him. Be so good as to give me your earliest decision on what would be safe and not too venturesome in the number of projected engravings, that I may put it into a train to be properly executed.'

September 20th, 1804.—'I hope you will excuse my delay in sending the books which I have had some time, but kept them back till I could send a proof of "The Shipwreck," which I hope will please. It yet wants all its last and finishing touches, but I hope you will be enabled by it to judge of the pathos of the picture. . . . I cannot help suggesting an idea which has struck me very forcibly, that the "Tobit and Tobias" in your bedchamber would make a very beautiful engraving, done in the same manner as the "Head of Cowper," after Lawrence; the heads to be finished, and the figures to be left exactly in imitation of the first strokes of the painter. The expression of those truly pathetic heads would then be transmitted to the public, a singular monument of Romney's genius in that slightest branch of art. I must now tell my wants, and beg the favour of some more of the needful. The favour of ten pounds more will carry me through this plate, and the "Head of Romney," for which I am already paid.'

23rd October, 1804.—'O lovely Felpham, parent of immortal friendship, to thee I am eternally indebted for my three years' rest from perturbation and the strength I now enjoy. Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Truchsellian Gallery of pictures, I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and by window-shutters. Consequently I can, with confidence, promise you ocular demonstration of my altered state on the plates I am now engraving

after Romney, whose spiritual aid has not a little conduced to my restoration to the light of Art.'

December 18*th*, 1804.—'I send, with some confidence, proofs of my two plates, having had the assistance and approbation of our good friend Flaxman. He approves much (I cannot help telling you so much) of "The Shipwreck." Mrs. Flaxman, also, who is a good connoisseur in engraving, has given her warm approbation, and to the plate of "The Portrait," though not yet in so high finished a state. I am sure (mark my confidence), with Flaxman's advice, which he gives with all the warmth of friendship both to you and me, it must be soon a highly finished and properly finished print; but yet I must solicit for a supply of money, and hope you will be convinced that the labour I have used on the two plates has left me without any resource but that of applying to you. I am again in want of ten pounds; hope that the size and neatness of my plate of "The Shipwreck" will plead for me the excuse for troubling you before it can be properly called finished, though Flaxman has already pronounced it so. I beg your remarks also on both my performances, as in their present state they will be capable of very much improvement from a few lucky or well-advised touches.'

28*th December*, 1804.—'The two cartoons which I have of "Hecate" and "Pliny" are very unequal in point of finishing: the "Pliny" is a sketch, though admirably contrived for an effect equal to Rembrandt. But the "Hecate" is a finished production, which will call for all the engraver's nicest attention. Indeed it is more finished than "The Shipwreck"; it is everybody's favourite who have seen it, and they regularly prefer it to "The Shipwreck" as a work of genius. . . .

'I am very far from showing the portrait of Romney as a finished proof. Be assured that with our good Flaxman's good help, and with your remarks on it in addition, I hope to make a "supernaculum." "The Shipwreck," also, will be infinitely better the next proof.'

Although William Blake was thus actively engaged throughout 1804 in collecting information for the *Life*, Hayley himself seems to have done little towards it during this or the following year. In March, 1806, a young friend, Mr. Marsh, of Oriel, visited him, and urged him to finish it. 'This he was very eager to do, but a variety of avocations prevented his immediate advance in it.' Later in the year, Caroline Watson, the engraver, spent some weeks at Felpham preparing drawings for the book, which she afterwards engraved in London. Hayley finished his task in the autumn of 1807 in some haste, lest, as

he says in his preface, 'death, which has repeatedly, and by some very unexpected and severe strokes, interrupted and perplexed, the progress of this performance, should ultimately strike the pen from the hand of the biographer, without allowing him to terminate what he has so long regarded as a sacred duty of friendship. It is more gratifying to the heart to suspend even an unfinished wreath of flowers over the tomb of a friend, than to leave it utterly destitute of due decoration.'

Blake's engraving of the painter's portrait, as already stated, was, for some reason, omitted from the published *Life*, and his only contribution was the 'Shipwreck at the Cape of Good Hope,' a very characteristic piece of work. The greater number of the remaining eleven plates were engraved by Caroline Watson in her best manner. 'The Head of Christ,' an outline, was etched by A. Raimbach, who afterwards became well-known as the engraver of Wilkie's pictures. Romney's early humorous picture from *Tristram Shandy* was the work of W. Haines, a Sussex engraver, who afterwards took to painting. Tom Hayley's medallion of the artist, which was included among the illustrations, was drawn by Maria Denman, Flaxman's sister-in-law, and engraved by Caroline Watson.

The book, which was printed at Chichester, was published in 1809, a few months after the author's second marriage, and, like that marriage, it was not a successful venture. By this time Hayley had lost much of his vogue as a writer and arbiter of literary taste, and the *Life* was received without enthusiasm. Its pompous and inflated diction, and the undue amount of space given to Hayley's own effusions, probably had much to do with this. A greater fault was the very inadequate notice given to what was, after all, the chief work of Romney's life—his portraits. There is scant mention of any of these, except where the sitters were personal friends of the writer's. Two other books of his, published about the same time—his edition of Cowper's *Milton* and a volume containing three of his own tragedies —were also failures, as he tells the world very frankly in his *Memoirs*, though he supported, 'with his usual vivacity of heart, the various disappointments that arose from the surprising ill-success that attended' all three of them.

John Romney's *Memoirs* of his father did not appear until twenty-one years after the publication of Hayley's volume. It was not, in the beginning, his intention to undertake anything in the nature of a

life, and, in his preface, he gives the reason which caused him to change his mind.

'When he considered how much he was bound by duty to protect the posthumous fame of his revered Relative,' he writes, 'and saw with mortification that all the accounts which have been given both of him and of his works were either defective, false, or injurious; his scruples arising from diffidence soon yielded to a more powerful impulse, and he should have deemed himself guilty of very culpable indifference if he had not endeavoured to dispel the malignant cloud that hangs over his Father's memory, and to place his character in its true light; by giving publicity to the documents in his possession, and by relating such circumstances as were within his own knowledge respecting the life and works of so rare a genius, which in fact none but himself could communicate. Whatever, therefore, may be his defects, he flatters himself that the candid reader, in weighing his motives and duties, will acquit him of any unbecoming vanity or presumption. Had he foreseen during the life of Mr. Romney, that the duty of being his biographer would devolve upon himself, he certainly could have saved many interesting anecdotes and characteristic traits which are now absorbed in the impenetrable gulph of oblivion.'

He gives, as the reason of his long delay, the excuses that 'the author had no intention of writing Mr. Romney's life till many years after his decease, and was only induced to do it in consequence of the errors and misrepresentations of others; his bad health, also, contributed much to delay the performance; not to mention other impeding causes arising from different avocations.'

The indignation he felt with regard to certain portions of Hayley's book was natural and becoming, more especially when they reflected upon Romney's character; but many of the errors arose from lack of information such as John Romney might well have supplied if it had not been for his strong antipathy to his father's old friend. There can be little doubt that Hayley received but scant help from this source.

The *Memoirs* were printed by Stephen Tyson, of Ulverston, and published by Baldwin and Cradock in 1830, with Romney's portrait of himself, now in the National Portrait Gallery, engraved by Thomas Wright, as a frontispiece.

MRS. ROBINSON ("PERDITA")

IN THE WALLACE COLLECTION, HERTFORD HOUSE

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LADY KATHERINE POULETT

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE HON. HAROLD FINCH-HATTON

PART II: THE MAN AND HIS METHODS

XX

MISS ANNA SEWARD, in writing to Hayley on March 7th, 1803, sums up the painter's character fairly well. 'Yourself and the world,' she says, 'have lost poor Romney; that soul of genius, honesty, generosity, and petulance—and you, yes you have left Eartham! your once darling Eartham! but my imagination obstinately refuses to separate your image from that dear lovely scene. Adieu! adieu!'

Ambition to succeed in his art was Romney's ruling passion, and to attain this end he sacrificed many of those social amenities which help to sweeten life. Excessively nervous and irritable in temperament, he withdrew into himself whenever possible, and his intercourse with the greater number of his fellows was marked by an habitual reserve. Although naturally of an amiable disposition, he rarely showed this side of his character to any but a few of his most intimate friends. He did not, as a rule, cultivate general society, though he was by no means the recluse which some of his biographers have pictured. In this he was the opposite of Sir Joshua, who, when his day's work was done, spent his hours of relaxation in companionship with cultivated and literary men, both in his own home, and in the houses of celebrated and fashionable people. Romney, on the other hand, preferred the tranquillity and seclusion of his own studio, and, unfortunately for his health and happiness, too often passed his evenings in working upon designs for pictures instead of resting his tired hand and exhausted brain; and constantly declined invitations which, if accepted, would have given him the needful change and repose for want of which both his health and art suffered. It used to be a saying of his, so Northcote asserts, that if a painter wished to do any good work, he must paint all day, and study all night, and this precept he was himself accustomed to practise.

In the spring he sometimes walked out to Kilburn Wells, or some

other public place to drink tea; and when the days were longer he would often dine at the Long Room, Hampstead. On these occasions he always had a sketch book with him, and jotted down anything that caught his fancy, such as a group of children, a passing face, or a cloud effect. He occasionally visited Bagnigge Wells, and other resorts of the kind frequented by the commoner people, which he regarded as excellent schools for the study of character.

Richard Cumberland somewhat exaggerates when he says that Romney 'was never seen at any of the tables of the Great, Lord Thurlow's excepted, who, being truly great, knew his merits well, and appreciated them worthily'; but it is true that the shyness and reserve of his nature made him an infrequent visitor at such places. Fanny Burney speaks of meeting him and his brother, Captain James Romney, then home on leave, at a big crush at the Hooles' in January 1784. 'There was an immense party between dinner and supper,' she notes in her diary, 'thirty five people, among them were Romney the painter, to whom I had the pleasure of being introduced, and a very pleasing man he seems to be! Dr. Kippis, Miss Williams the poetess, Captain Romney, Mr. Romney's brother, the Kirwans, and Captain Phillips, . . . Count Alfieri. . . . I had a good flashing evening, for Talamas stood behind my chair talking part of the time, and as soon as he crossed over to speak to Mrs. Shadwell, Captain Romney took his place.' Talamas was an Asiatic who was much in London society about this time.

In a letter to Hayley, already quoted, written in the summer of 1791, Romney describes how he has been dining with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, meeting a crowd of fashionable people who came in afterwards to hear the hostess sing, and how entranced he was by her acting. Later in the same month he gave a grand entertainment in her honour in his own house, to which various members of the nobility were bidden, before whom she sang and acted 'with most astonishing powers.'

Among his associates were the elder Sheridan, Henderson, the actor, whom Gainsborough painted more than once, Evans the bookseller and wit, the Rev. C. Este, editor of the *World* newspaper and author of *A Journey through Flanders*, and some other distinguished people. Between the painter and Henderson, in particular, there was much friendly intercourse, and Romney painted him as 'Macbeth meeting the Witches,' at about the time when Henderson and Sheridan were giving their public readings. The actor and artist

belonged to a small club, which eventually took to itself the name of 'The Unincreasables,' and was limited to eight members. Romney dined at the club with some regularity, and his fellow clubmen put down ten guineas a-piece and purchased his portrait of Henderson, which they raffled among themselves, the winner being William Long, the surgeon. The picture was engraved in mezzotint by John Jones in 1787. Two of the witches are said to be portraits of Charles Macklin and John Williams. The third, according to John Romney, was based on a sketch made by Romney, during one of the readings, of the face of a man who was staring with all his attention at Sheridan. One of the witches speaks with raised forefinger, while the others hold a finger to their lips; a procession crosses the plain in the distance.

The names of his most intimate friends have been given in the preceding pages. Hayley, of course, was the closest of them all, and the one who had the most influence upon his character. His annual visits to Eartham were almost his only holidays, and though his host was apt to urge him to undertake fresh work instead of persuading him to rest, the change was of the greatest advantage to his health. He occasionally spent a few days at Colne Priory with the family of his friend, the Rev. Thomas Carwardine, whose portrait and that of his wife and infant son he painted just after his return from Italy. The latter is one of his most lovely creations, and is now in the possession of Lord Hillingdon. In the earlier years of his residence in London he saw much of Richard Cumberland; and certain friends of his youth, who came from the same part of the country as he did, such as Daniel Braithwaite, Adam Walker, Thomas Greene, and William Cockin, remained in close touch with him throughout life. Greene indeed rendered him true and constant service in looking after his monetary affairs, and acted as his adviser in all business matters. These men of the north were all sober, upright citizens of the middle-class, whose friendship is a proof that Romney lived a clean and reputable life.

His relationships with his brother painters were, with few exceptions, less cordial. He was friendly with Ozias Humphry, Jeremiah Meyer, Hodges, Gilpin, Blake, and one or two others, but John Flaxman was the one artist among his contemporaries whom he sincerely loved. He appears to have had no personal acquaintanceship with Gainsborough, though they had more than one friend in common. The mutual antipathy which existed between him and Reynolds has been already touched upon; how much of it was due to Romney's shy,

suspicious nature it is difficult to say. 'Some of the old members of the Royal Academy,' according to his son, 'regarded him as a kind of independent rival; and, as he kept himself aloof from them, entertained hostile feelings towards him, which they lost no opportunity of expressing. There were others, however, among them, with whom he lived on terms of friendship, and who were free from that intolerant *esprit du corps*, so incompatible with the liberal spirit of the arts.' Nollekens, the sculptor, was certainly one of the former. 'No persons could more cordially hate each other than Romney and Nollekens,' says J. T. Smith in his *Life* of the latter; 'Mr. Greville, Hayley and Flaxman, were staunch friends of the former, who, from some pique, objected to the latter modelling from any of his portraits. Flaxman, on the contrary, was so great a favourite with Romney, that, in his letters to Hayley, he absolutely idolizes him.' Cunningham, in his *Life*, after speaking of him as 'a man of great natural courtesy,' adds that 'Reynolds, it would seem, disliked both the man and his works; and such was the omnipotence of the President, that on whomsoever his evil eye alighted, that person had small chance for the honours of the Academy. Fuseli, too,—but that was in a later day—ranked Romney with those whom he called "coat and waistcoat painters."

'On the other hand, it must be acknowleged that Romney was equally sensitive and proud—a man most easily moved to anger or to love—covetous of approbation, and willing to resent difference of opinion, as a sin at once against himself and pure taste. He was, from all I have heard, a man likely enough to take a sort of pleasure in having it said that he belonged not to the Royal Academy, and witnessing the odium which the President's party incurred by keeping an artist of his talents and fame out of their ranks.'

Northcote tells a story in his *Reminiscences*, which indicates how little sympathy there was between the two painters:—'One morning when Garrick paid a visit to Sir Joshua Reynolds I overheard him, as I was then working in the adjoining room. He was speaking with great freedom of Cumberland the author, and condemned his dramatic works. I remember his expression was this—"Damn his dish-clout face! His plays would never do for the stage if I did not cook them up and make epilogues and prologues too for them, and so they go down with the public." He also added, "He hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire his Correggio." "What Correggio?" answered Sir Joshua. "Why, his Correggio," replied Garrick, "is Romney the painter."'

A further reference to the relations which existed between the two men will be found in the recently published memoirs of Lord Holland,[1] who records in his diary that 'Reynolds was prosperous in his life and cheerful in his temper. It is possible that he might not be, at all seasons, quite exempt from that jealousy to which artists are so particularly liable. In mitigation, however, if not in contradiction, to such insinuations against him, I can myself bear testimony to his speaking frequently of Gainsborough in terms of kindness and admiration; of Wilson, whom he is supposed to have disliked personally, with high commendation; and even of Romney, whom a set of minor wits were industrious in extolling at his expense, with full acknowledgment of his peculiar merits, and with ample praise of his talents as a draughtsman.' Hayley displayed decided acumen in the contrast he drew between the art and character of Reynolds and Romney. 'We may consider,' he holds, 'an ardent and powerful imagination, acute and delicate sensibility, and a passion for study, as the three qualities peculiarly essential towards forming a great artist. Of these three important endowments, I believe nature to have bestowed a larger portion on Romney than on Reynolds; but in her bounty to the latter she added some inestimable qualities, which more than turned the scale in his favour. They rendered him pre-eminent in three great objects of human pursuit, in fortune, in felicity and in fame.'

Reynolds, he goes on to say, had 'that mild and serene wisdom, which enables a man to exert whatever talents he possesses with the fullest and happiest effect,' and, 'a highly-polished good humour, which conciliates universal esteem; and disarms, if it does not annihilate, that envious malevolence, which genius and prosperity are so apt to excite. Doctor Johnson very truly said of Reynolds, that he was the most invulnerable of men; but of Romney it might be said, with equal truth, that a man could hardly exist, whom it was so easy to wound. His imagination was so tremblingly alive, that even a slight appearance of coldness in a friend, or of hostility in a critic, was sometimes sufficient to suspend or obstruct the exertion of his finer faculties. Had it been possible for Romney to have united a dauntless and invariable serenity of mind to such feelings and powers, as he possessed, when his nerves were happily free from all vexatious irritation, I am persuaded he would have risen to a degree of excellence in art superior to what has hitherto been displayed.'

Cumberland in his *Memoirs*, published in 1806, also attempts a

[1] *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party, 1807-1821*, edited by Lord Stavordale, 1905.

comparison between the two painters. After speaking of Reynolds, he continues:—'Romney in the mean time shy, private, studious and contemplative; conscious of all the disadvantages and privations of a very stinted education; of a habit naturally hypochondriac, with aspen nerves, that every breath could ruffle, was at once in art the rival, and in nature the very contrast of Sir Joshua. A man of few wants, strict œconomy and with no dislike to money, he had opportunities enough to enrich him even to satiety, but he was at once so eager to begin, and so slow in finishing his portraits, that he was for ever disappointed of receiving payments for them by the casualties and revolutions in the families they were designed for, so many of his sitters were *killed off*, so many favourite ladies were dismissed, so many fond wives divorced, before he would bestow half-an-hour's pains upon their petticoats, that his unsaleable stock was immense, whilst with a little more regularity and decision he would have more than doubled his fortune, and escaped an infinitude of petty troubles, that disturbed his temper. At length exhausted rather by the languour than by the labour of his mind, this admirable artist retired to his native county in the north of England, and there, after hovering between life and death, neither wholly deprived of the one, nor completely rescued by the other, he continued to decline, till at last he sunk into a distant and inglorious grave, fortunate alone in this, that his fame is consigned to the protection of Mr. Hayley, from whom the world expects his history.'

Added to a morbid sensitiveness, which kept him in a constant dread of criticism, and often made life a misery to him, his character was marked by an irresolution and lack of moral courage, which reflected seriously upon his art. His constant, almost passionate, desire to devote the larger part of his time to the production of great designs, and to abandon portraiture for a higher form of painting, was frustrated by this weakness of his nature, and not, as Cumberland suggests, by his love of money. He had to make his own way in the world, without assistance from his own or other people, and had a wife and family to keep, and brothers to help, so that it was natural for him to devote himself to the hard labour of painting portraits for so long as his future prospects remained unassured. But there was no avaricious strain in his character, and his chief incentive to labour until he had made for himself a modest fortune, was that by its means he would be able, in the end, to devote himself to that branch of painting in which he so ardently desired to become famous.

Cumberland, to quote again from the short memoir published in

The European Magazine, continues :—'Mr. Romney was the maker of his own fortune; and inasmuch as he allowed himself not sufficient leisure to execute many great designs, which the fertility of his genius conceived, may be said so far to have been more attentive to that than to his fame. Whilst his mind was pregnant with magnificent ideas, and his rooms and passages loaded with unfinished portraits, he had not resolution to turn away a new comer, though he might come with a countenance that would have chilled the genius of a Michael Angelo. If, therefore, it was the love of gain that operated on him upon these occasions, it was a principle that counteracted its own object; but there was also a weakness in his nature that could never make a stand against importunity of any sort; he was a man of a most gentle temper, with most irritable nerves. He was constantly projecting great undertakings for the honour of his art, and at the same time involving himself in new engagements to render them impracticable.'

John Romney, as was only natural, took exception to this view of his father's conduct. 'Mr. Romney' he replied in defence, 'undoubtedly had his share of infirmities; but his errors were rather the offspring of circumstance, than originating from any corrupt principle. He was the dupe of his feelings, but exempt from all gross propensities. His honour and his honesty were naturally pure; and he harboured no malevolent passions in his breast. He was free from the debasing influence of avarice, which has been imputed to Sir Joshua. Mr. Cumberland, indeed, has said, that "he had no dislike to money"; but this reflection is as unkind as it is uncandid. Mr. Romney, from having had to struggle for so many years with poverty, had, perhaps, contracted some little habits of parsimony, but the mind had no participation in them. Can a man be said to be fond of money who had the generosity to advance his brother six hundred pounds, to fit him out for India, which was all the money he had in the world, and which he had saved in the preceding year! But this Mr. Romney did, and at that period of his life too (aged forty-two) when it became highly expedient that he should lose no time in providing for himself. Mr. Cumberland ought to have remembered, that when he himself was in need, after his return from Spain, Mr. Romney advanced him five hundred pounds in the most liberal manner. Being a man of tender feelings, he was ever alive to applications for charity; and the readiness with which he gave, made those applications frequent. He felt every disposition, also, to succour young artists of talent; and whenever he

heard of any such impeded by poverty, his purse was open for their assistance. . . . It was not in the want of generosity, but in the misapplication of it, that his fault lay. When a man makes his feelings his guide, he follows an *ignis fatuus*, which may lead him into bogs and quagmires. There was a fibre about Mr. Romney's heart, which the artful and designing knew well how to touch, and make subservient to their own base views and advantage. Whatever errors he committed they mainly sprang from this source.'

His generosity was, indeed, undoubted. Colonel James Romney was not the only brother he helped, though the only one who repaid him. He rescued Peter from a debtor's prison, and set him on his unstable legs more than once. Even Hayley and Cumberland borrowed from him. When young Flaxman was about to start for Rome, the older artist wished him to take two hundred pounds, which was delicately offered and gratefully declined. Mention has been already made of the assistance he gave to his landlord at Pine Apple Place at a critical moment. Such instances prove that he never hesitated to help those in trouble with gifts of large sums of money, sums which, during the earlier period of his career, he could ill afford to lose, though his propensity for giving, except as regards his pictures, was not quite so fantastic as that of Gainsborough. He spent little upon himself, being careful and economical in his habits, and made no attempt to live in grand style. His only extravagance was in the house-building of his last years, and in spite of the money thus thrown away at Hampstead, he left his family in very comfortable circumstances.

Flaxman, in the sketch he wrote for Hayley's *Life*, says of him that 'no one could be more modest concerning himself; seldom speaking of any thing he did, and never in reference to its merits. But he was exceedingly liberal respecting others, rarely finding faults in the works of his contemporaries, and giving cordial praise wherever he saw excellence. An instance of his conduct relating to Sir Joshua Reynolds deserves to be mentioned. Being present when some intimate friends were delivering their opinions on Sir Joshua's picture of Hercules strangling the serpents, painted for the Empress of Russia, "Gentlemen, (said he) I have listened to all you have said; some observations are true, and some are nonsense, but no other man in Europe could paint such a picture."'

Cumberland gives a graphic description of his behaviour in the intimacy of private life, which should not go unquoted :—

'When in company with his intimates (and indeed few others were admitted to his privacy), he would sit for a length of time absorbed in thought, and absent from the matter in discourse, till on a sudden starting from his seat, he would give vent to the effusions of his fancy, and harangue in the most animated manner upon the subject of his art, with a sublimity of idea, and a peculiarity of expressive language, that was entirely his own, and in which education or reading had no share. These sallies of natural genius, clothed in natural eloquence, were perfectly original, very highly edifying, and entertaining in the extreme. They were uttered in a hurried accent, an elevated tone, and very commonly accompanied with tears, to which he was by constitution prone. A noble sentiment, either recited from book by the reader, or springing from the heart of the speaker, never failed to make his eyes overflow, and his voice tremble, whilst he applauded it. He was on these occasions like a man possessed, and his friends became studious not to agitate him too often, or too much, with topics of this sort.'

Hayley also says that 'in conversation he was often delightfully eloquent, particularly in describing to a friend pathetic scenes in humble life, which he often explored; sometimes for the purpose of discovering new subjects for his art, and frequently for the nobler purpose of relieving distress.'

The education he received as a boy was a poor one, but he had learnt much in the great school of nature, and was in no ways the ignorant countryman his rivals imagined, or, at least, reported him to be. The numerous extracts from his letters which Hayley printed,[1] in part to show that the charge made in public by one of his friends that he was 'so grossly illiterate that he was utterly unable to write even an ordinary letter,' was absolutely unfounded, could not have been penned by an ignorant man. Romney hated writing an ordinary epistle of thanks or civility, and his spelling was as uncertain as that of most of his contemporaries, but when communicating on terms of intimacy with a friend, 'he could write,' says the bard of Eartham, 'with a natural eloquence, flowing from feelings at once so tender, and so acute, that the language, they suggested, could hardly fail to excite a considerable degree of sympathy, even in a stranger.' His biographer, indeed, goes so far as to suggest that had he used the pen instead of the pencil, he would have become as original a writer as Rousseau.

[1] Hayley apparently 'edited' these letters, and certainly corrected the spelling.

Allan Cunningham puts the whole case very clearly when he declares that 'Nature had given him strong talents, a keen eye, curiosity, and imagination; the exercise of his profession kept him in constant collision with people of various orders;—in a word, nature and society held their leaves open before him; and out of these universal volumes, with such aid of printed books as chance might throw in his way, Romney had, somehow or other, educated himself much better than ninety-nine out of a hundred, in any university in the world, ever were or will be.'

What Hayley says about Rousseau is, of course, merely the natural exaggeration of a friend, but it must be acknowledged that the letters show that Romney possessed considerable power of expression, while in more than one of the earlier ones there is evidence that he had a sense of humour, though he did not often give it play.

The following letter, written from Lancaster in his youthful days, to his friend Adam Walker, in Preston, is certainly not the work of an utterly illiterate man:—

'On Tuesday morning, at six o'clock, I had just raised my head from my pillow to go and mount my hobby-horse, when my mortal clay proved so heavy, I sunk down into the hollow my round shoulders had made. My imagination immediately took a journey—Oh imagination where wilt thou ramble, and what wilt thou seek? Did I not find more pleasure in thy contemplative excursions than in bodily enjoyments, I would not give two-pence for this world. But I say my imagination took a journey, a journey it often takes; never a day comes, but it is wandering to that same Preston. What it can find there so attractive God knows. However when I had travelled over that vast tract of land in half a second, the first object that saluted my sight was a tall, lean figure, walking with an important air, as erect as the dancing master in Hogarth's Analysis. "Good God! (say I to myself) who can this be? I certainly must know the person, but he seems so disguised with that importance and gravity, which look so like burlesque, I can scarce forbear smiling." As he approached nearer he turned his face towards me—with an earnest look made a stand—threw off his disguise by drawing up the muscles of his cheeks, and hiding his eyes. Astonishing! I stood motionless three seconds, then ran up to him, catched hold of his hand with the eagerness with which sincere friends generally meet; "My dear Walker how do you do? By my soul I am glad to see

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LADY LEMON

IN THE COLLECTION OF COLONEL TREMAYNE

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you, and find you are well, &c." "O Sir, not so familiar."—"Sir I humbly beg pardon for saluting your importance in so rough a manner in the open street, &c."'

It was not self-consciousness, arising from the perception of his lack of education that forced him to hold aloof from general society as much as possible; but rather an acutely sensitive and suspicious nature, combined with a vivid imagination, which caused him to fancy slights when none were intended, and to construe indifference into enmity. Although his friendships among artists were few, he was always just and generous in his appreciation of their work. 'He was a rapturous advocate for nature,' says Cumberland, 'and a close copyist, abhorring from his heart every distortion, or unseemly violation, of her pure and legitimate forms and proportions. An enflamed and meretricious stile of colouring he could never endure; and the contemplation of bad painting sensibly affected his spirits and shook his nerves.' But where praise was due he was never backward in giving it, and where it was not he believed in the wisdom of silence. 'To the distinguished merits of his great contemporary Sir Joshua Reynolds he gave most unequivocal testimony; but he declined to visit him, from the shyness of his nature, and because it was a house of great resort. He could not be at his ease, and he was never in the habit of visiting, or being visited but by his intimates; and they certainly did not resort to him for the delicacies of his table; as nothing could be worse administered; for of those things he had no care, and for himself a little broth or tea would suffice, though he worked at his eazil from early morning till the sun went down.'

As his age increased, and his health became enfeebled through an intemperate indulgence in work, and want of proper exercise and relaxation, his petulance, irritability, and morbidness grew greater, until he was rarely free from the miserable depression resulting from hypochondria.

'The infirmities of old age,' says his son, 'came upon Mr. Romney sooner than he expected; he reckoned upon a longer life, and in truth, according to the common course of vigorous nature, he might have retained his faculties unimpaired for at least ten years longer. His constitution, however, began to give way in his sixtieth year, (1794); but his genius, like the light of a taper approaching to its extinction, occasionally burst into fits of splendour during its decline.'

He then quotes a letter which he received from his father, written on March 15th, 1794, which shows how this irritability of mind was growing upon him—'I have made many grand designs, I have formed a system of original subjects, moral, and my own—and I think one of the grandest that has been thought of—but nobody knows it. Hence it is my view to wrap myself in retirement, and pursue these plans, as I begin to feel I cannot bear trouble of any kind.'

According to the same biographer, Romney 'was naturally of a placid and easy disposition, and it was only in the decline of life, when his health was impaired by application, and his feelings ruffled by peculiar circumstances, that he manifested that morbidness of feeling, which Mr. Hayley has been so particular in noticing. The love of retirement, combining its influence with this diseased state of his mind, soon began to generate visionary and expensive schemes, which, instead of ministering to his comfort, aggravated his infirmities. He had lived so long in peculiar habits, that he had lost the just conception of that happiness, which results from retirement; its impressions, however, still remained on his memory, but distorted and exaggerated by the influence of a distempered imagination. From his youth he meditated on retirement; it was a family propensity.'

During these periods of acute depression he was not always the most pleasant of companions, even in the genial atmosphere of Eartham, where he was most at home, and received the most flattering attentions.

'It was certainly a task of some anxious care,' writes the master of the house, 'to preserve in the mind of Romney, a tolerable degree of social serenity, when his health was disordered; for with great mental powers, he had never acquired that proper instantaneous command of an excellent understanding, so necessary to the preservation of mental peace; a species of dominion hardly ever acquired by any mortal of such exquisite sensibility; for his feelings were quick, and acute, to an astonishing and perilous degree. He was subject to "thick-coming fancies," concerning trivial variations in the symptoms of his health; but whatever trouble his friends of Eartham could take in their solicitude to restore him, it was abundantly compensated by the delight they took not only in his talents, but in his affectionate attachment to the scene, where he had now been a favorite guest more than twenty years.'

One other side of his character, touched upon by Hayley with

his usual affectionate exaggeration, should find a place in any attempt to give a complete picture of the man. He writes:—

'Of Romney I can say, with the most satisfactory conviction, that he had a most sincere and cordial reverence for the Gospel. . . . It was in truth his intention to devote his pencil, and his mind, in the full maturity of their powers, to subjects derived from that religion, which not only surpasses every other, as a rule of life, but affords also the richest and purest fund of pathetic and sublime imagery to exercise, and ennoble, all the finest of the arts. His devotional feelings were naturally so strong that if he had employed his talents entirely on sacred subjects, he would have greatly resembled that amiable and devout painter of Italy, Fra Giovanni Angelico, who never resumed his pencil without a prayer, and had his eyes filled with tears in representing the sufferings of our Saviour.'

By far the greatest blot on his character, a fault which it is less easy to forgive than to excuse, was his desertion of his wife for thirty-seven years. Excuses of a certain kind may be found for him, but even with this help it is difficult to condone such conduct. Few, indeed, of the many who have written about the man and his art, have attempted to do so. Abuse and scorn have been showered upon him in superabundance, sometimes with an intemperance and lack of justice which defeat their own ends through their over-emphasis.

Certainly, in the beginning, Romney had no intention that the parting should be more than a temporary one, undertaken for the threefold purpose of suitable provision for the support of his family, of improvement in his art, and of gaining for himself an assured position among the leading painters of the day. It was, indeed, a case of the gradual drifting apart of two natures not altogether well matched, for Romney was entirely wrapped up in his art, while his wife, as far as can be gathered, was indifferent to all that for him made life worth living.

Romney always kept the fact of his marriage in the background; but there is no proof that he wilfully concealed it from the world. Even had he desired to do so, it would have been impossible, for he had several north-country friends in London who knew all about his affairs, and the few men with whom he became intimate, such as Hayley, were well aware that he was a married man. But to his sitters, who soon became numerous, and to his mere acquaintances, he

kept silence, influenced to some extent, no doubt, by the current report that Sir Joshua, then at the height of his reputation, had declared that it was fatal to the prospects of a young artist to get married. It seems to have been Reynolds's habit to make some such remark to all young painters. J. T. Smith, in his *Life of Nollekens*, says that 'Sir Joshua Reynolds, meeting Flaxman soon after he had received the hand of Miss Denman, in 1782, said to him: "So, Flaxman, you are married; there's no going to Italy now." Mr. Baily, my informant, added, that it has been said, that it was in consequence of this observation of the President that he was determined to visit Rome.' Some such remark as this, made twenty years earlier to some other artist, may, if told to Romney, have helped to intensify his reticence about his own marriage. As time of absence lengthened, any return to the earlier and more intimate relationship grew more difficult. Romney now moved in a society of much higher standing than he had done in Kendal, and one in which the homely wife in the North would have felt out of place and ill at ease. He did not fail completely in his duty, for his income he always shared with her, and he gave his son, who was a constant visitor in his father's house, an University education; but in his successes in the world of art she had no share, and, apparently, did not ask it. This desertion, all the same, must have had a lasting effect on such a sensitive, irritable nature as Romney's. Habit may have blunted the feeling, but useless regrets must often have grown insistent, and much of the unhappiness of the latter years of his life was, no doubt, due to his knowledge that through lack of moral courage he had signally failed in one of the most sacred duties a man can undertake. We know practically nothing of the wife's side of the case, except that she was a woman with an unbounded capacity for forgiveness; for when Romney, old, half-paralysed, with failing brain, and a hand which had completely lost its cunning, finally returned to her, she uttered no word of reproach or complaint, but nursed him through the three years that remained to him with a tender affection and careful solicitude which he had done little or nothing to deserve. There can be small doubt that Romney's life would have been happier, and he might, too, have left behind him a greater body of completed work, outside his portraiture, in the field in which he was always striving for success, if his wife had shared his home, if not his ambitions, and had brought into it that intimate sympathy in the affairs of daily life which would have strengthened his character where it was weakest, and helped him to conquer some at least of the imaginary

troubles which his morbid fancy constantly conjured up, to the great detriment both of his health and of his art.

Romney's treatment of his wife has been so often and so severely criticised, sometimes with but little knowledge of the real facts, and is, in any case, a question of such exceptional interest in a life which in all other ways was well ordered, and free from any suggestion of evil-doing, that the explanation of it given by his rival biographers, upon which almost all such criticism is based, is well worth quoting, at least in part, in their own words.

This is how Hayley deals with the subject:—'There is a kind of rash repentance for an imprudent and irretrievable measure, which may be infinitely more imprudent, and more injurious, than the measure itself—such repentance was the great error and infelicity in the life of my too apprehensive friend. It is a maxim too prevalent in the world, and a maxim, which, from its unfavourable influence on the great interests of mankind, deserves the most zealous animadversion, that early marriage is a mill-stone round the neck of an enterprising young man, who aspires to make his fortune by the cultivation of his talents. . . . My readers may be more inclined to pity the juvenile Romney for having acted under the distracting influence of such an idea, when they are informed, that, in a very mature season of life, his great rival, Sir Joshua Reynolds, entertained the same erroneous apprehension. When a young student, of the highest hopes in our country, waited on that illustrious President of the Academy, and said "that he was preparing to pursue his studies in Italy, and that he was just married":—"Married (exclaimed Sir Joshua), then you are ruined as an artist." If the mildest, and most polite painter of Europe could, by the influence of this pernicious idea, be hurried into an expression so coarse, so cruel, and as the event most happily proved, so utterly false, what agony of spirit may we justly suppose the same idea to have produced in the young married Romney, whose constitutional character united the opposite extremes of the most apprehensive diffidence, and the most aspiring ambition! He described his mental sufferings on this occasion in terms, that might excite compassion even in a flinty heart.

'The terror of precluding himself from those distant honours, which he panted for in his profession, by appearing in the world as a young married man, agitated the ambitious artist almost to distraction, and made him resolve very soon after his marriage, as he had no means of breaking the fetters, which he wildly regarded as inimical to the

improvement and exertion of genius, to hide them as much as possible from his troubled fancy. The return of his master from his nuptial excursion, and his sudden removal from Kendal to York, which took place in a few days after the marriage of his apprentice, afforded a most seasonable termination to this excruciating conflict in the mind of Romney.

'Being thus removed from the object of his inquietude, he gradually recovered the powers of his extraordinary mind, a mind of exquisite sensibility, and of towering faculties, but unhappily distracted with a tumultuary crowd of ambitious and apprehensive conceits.'

'The young artist became, by the cancelling of his indentures, completely his own master, yet, like his early friend, the unfortunate alchymist, he beheld in an innocent wife a supposed impediment to every splendid project. Perhaps the example of a friend, whom he had tenderly regarded, might influence the conduct of the painter: at all events he resolved instead of settling, as a family man, to wander forth alone into the distant world in quest of professional adventures.'

It is hardly surprising that Hayley's statement of the case should be questioned by John Romney; and the indignation he displayed in defending both his parents from what he considered to be gross aspersions was quite natural under the circumstances. 'I have not a shadow of doubt of the sincerity of his intentions,' he wrote, 'and he expressly declared to her at parting, that the great object he had in view, was, to be enabled to support her and his family with respectability in London. When people are sanguine, they never calculate difficulties; otherwise, they might have foreseen that much time, under any ordinary circumstances, must elapse before he could be able to realize his intentions. As Mrs. Romney was a woman of an energetic and courageous mind, I often wondered, and once took the liberty to ask her, why she suffered herself to be separated from her husband? She said, she did everything for the best. Mr. Hayley, however, with a feeling that ill accords with friendship, has insinuated that Mr. Romney, in thus withdrawing from his family, was acting upon a plan of preconceived and deliberate abandonment. This is so manifest a calumny that it is almost unnecessary to confute it. It is in opposition to the most powerful instincts of our nature. It is quite improbable that a father, who was so capable of enjoying, as well as of delineating the playfulness and vivacity of children in general, could have been so

insensible to the same qualities in his own, who were not, as I have understood, deficient in the graces and charms of infancy, as deliberately to cast them off, and to abandon them for ever. As a proof that he entertained no such intention, he came twice afterwards to see his wife.

'The best way to ascertain the true character of a man's actions, is, to weigh his motives. As Mr. Romney had resolution to forego the endearments of domestic life for the noble purpose of providing for the future welfare of his family; his motives were certainly good, and would justify his separation in the first instance.'

After explaining why he felt obliged, in spite of his repugnance to touch upon the topic at all, to correct Hayley's errors and misrepresentations, and giving the bard, in the course of these explanations, a shrewd knock or two with regard to his own marital failings, he goes on to say:—

'Why Mr. Romney never realized his professions to his wife, may be otherwise accounted for, than attributing it to the ungenerous motives imputed by Mr. Hayley. From the very first, his brothers became a heavy burthen to him and drained him of his savings. He deemed it necessary, also, in order to promote his professional views, first to visit Paris, and at a subsequent period, Rome: which peregrinations consumed all the money he could raise on those respective occasions: thus a succession of untoward circumstances threw impediments in the way of good intent, till time and absence became impediments also. Besides, when Mr. Romney first went to London and began to associate with the young artists of the day, he, from a sort of reserve peculiar to himself, did not communicate the circumstance of his marriage; and by investing it, as it were, with a kind of secrecy, only increased his repugnance to divulge it; till, at length, by becoming an object of fear, the transition would be easy to that of dislike;—Quod timemus odimus.'

He then suggests that a further cause of estrangement may have been that Romney, though his ruling passion was the love of art, and not the desire for money, could not help contrasting his lot with that of two of his contemporaries, Nathaniel Dance and John Astley, both of whom had married rich widows; but this seems ridiculous, and not at all in keeping with Romney's character.

'Perhaps nothing contributed more to confirm him in habits of estrangement from his wife than the society of Mr. Hayley, who had the greatest influence over his affections and feelings. As, however,

Mr. Romney's transgressions arose in the first place out of the necessity of his circumstances, and only stole into his habits and modes of life by the slow process of time; they ought not to be visited with that severity of censure which would attach to direct abandonment. It is much to be regretted that so unfortunate a circumstance should have cast a shade upon his character—illustrious by the splendour of his genius, and estimable for many private virtues.'

No one has summed up Romney's character better than Mr. Sidney Colvin, in a series of papers entitled 'From Rigaud to Reynolds: characteristics of French and English Painting in the Eighteenth Century,' contributed to the *Portfolio* in 1873. What he has to say about the painter is severe but true.

'There are some men,' he says, 'upon whom, as they go about the business of their lives, you seem to see the mark of that which the old cabalists meant when they spoke of a man as having been born under the influence of the Moon. The Moon was the planet which made the imagination of a man his master. To have no Moon in your composition was to have no play of imagination, no capacity for waking dreams. But to have too much Moon was to dream awake all your days. It was to want both perseverance and the sense of reality; it was to have a teeming brain and a seething fantasy; it was to propose a thousand things, and always to let yourself be called off by the next thing from your endeavour to execute the last. The man whose Moon lorded it over his other planets would be one sure of the goal at starting, who should drop out of the race before the end; he would think great deeds, but not achieve them; he would entertain a poet in his bosom, but produce none before the world; he would woo, but not win perfection; he would be always doing and desisting, and not be able to tell you why; he would love, and break off without a cause; be loved, and plague himself with the assurance of coldness; he would be rich, and in dread of bankruptcy; robust, and talk about his ensuing death. Pray for him that the other planets may put forth their influence, may steady and regulate the Moon in him as he grows older, or you shall see him end his days in ineffectiveness, disappointment, and perhaps despair.

'Nearly such a man was the painter Romney. Look at his portraits of himself, and trace their type according to the reading of cabalists—the lateral expansion above the temples, the wide shape of the head which indicates straggling and not concentrated powers; the extended impressionable mouth, all poignant sensibility and no

determined continuousness of effort; everything mobile and wandering except only the eyes; those are an artist's eyes, and do settle themselves to observe you with the fixity and penetration of the artistic habit. And the look of straggling and mobility, the look of ambition without fixity and without self-confidence, the look of distrust in the midst of fire and eagerness, and of a sensitiveness with no strength for its own control, increase instead of diminishing with age.'

Again, in speaking of Romney's long absence from his wife:—'In truth, Hayley's account of the matter is the more probable one. It is true that Romney's sensibilities were in their way exquisite; but they were not the sensibilities of conscience; and true, as Hayley is perpetually insisting, that his heart was tender, but it was not with the tenderness of constancy. Hayley is a shrewder man than he seems beneath his maudlin volubility. . . . He is not unacquainted with the nature of those fantastical motives, those motiveless sequences and revulsions of impulse, those groundless inferences passing into aimless acts, which make up the tissue of a life fatally subject to the Moon and to imagination. He surprises you, in the middle of pages of amiable grandiloquent maunder round about his subject, with a sentence here and there which goes to the centre of it. He points a comparison of Romney with Hamlet, and another of Romney with Rousseau, which show a greater sense both of literature and human nature than you would have expected from one whom you are perpetually calling plague upon to yourself as a driveller. And when he accounts for what common sense finds unaccountable in Romney's conduct, by saying that his was "a mind of exquisite sensibility and towering faculties, but unhappily distracted with a tumultuary crowd of ambitious and apprehensive conceits," you feel that his grandiloquence has fairly hit it, and that there is not much more to be said.'

Hayley is the only one of his contemporaries who has left us an account of the painter's personal appearance. 'The person of Romney,' he says, 'was rather tall, his features were broad and strong, his hair was dark, his eyes indicated much vigour, and still more acuteness of mind. The feature of the human visage, which he considered as the surest index of the heart, was in his own countenance very remarkable. By the quick or tardy movement of the fibres around the lips, he was accustomed to estimate the degrees of sensibility in his sitters; and of himself, in this particular, it might have been said with truth,

"His own example strengthens all his laws:
He is himself, THE SENSITIVE he draws."

For his heart had all the tenderness of nature; never I believe, were the lips of any man more quick to quiver with emotions of generous pity at the sight of distress, or at the relation of a pathetic story. His feelings indeed were perilously acute. They made him a man of many frailties, but the primary characteristic of his nature was that true christian charity, which more than compensates for manifold imperfections.'

There are several portraits of Romney in existence from his own hand, slight unfinished sketches for the most part, over which he spent little time or labour. In this respect he differed from Reynolds and Gainsborough, who left behind them some fine examples of self-portraiture. Only in one instance did he attempt an important picture of himself, and even this might have perished among the stacks of discarded and incomplete canvases at Hampstead, if Hayley had not prudently insisted on keeping it at Eartham, when Romney returned to town, instead of allowing him to take it with him, as the artist wanted, to finish it at leisure.

This is the powerful study in oils, in which the head is almost complete, now in the National Portrait Gallery, the painting of which has been already described, which reveals his character both in its strength and weakness far better than it is possible to do by means of written words. It displays deeper insight into the intricacies of the human mind than is to be found in many of his representations of men. It is the portrait of a dreamer, and one whose dreams are by no means always happy ones, and it gives glimpses of a soul at times tortured by imaginary fears, and of a nature easily moved to emotion. (See Plate XI.)

An interesting portrait, said to be of Romney by himself, was added to the Sala dei Pittori in the Uffizi Gallery in 1905, from the collection of the Hon. Walter Rothschild. Mr. Lawrence Romney, who has examined it in Florence, considers it to be a good and genuine early work of his, but is not quite satisfied that it is a portrait of Romney himself, though certainly of a member of the Romney family, possibly one of the painter's brothers. The hair is quite fair, but both Hayley and Allan Cunningham say that Romney's hair was dark; and the eyes do not look the keen, dark eyes of Romney. Whoever it may be, it was probably painted soon after his arrival in London. There is little use in it of Indian red, a colour of which he

MRS. JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

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MRS. TOWNLEY WARD

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was so fond in later years, and there are spotty touches of light red on the face. It is a half-length, the chin held between the finger and thumb of the right hand, which is well painted, and opalescent high lights play over the forehead, nose, and the back of the hand. It was reproduced in *The Connoisseur* for September 1905, p. 50.

XXI

HIS habits and methods of work, when at the height of his career as a portrait painter, have been best described by his pupil, Thomas Robinson, of Windermere, who was with him about the year 1785. Robinson set down his recollections on paper many years afterwards for the use of Hayley, when the latter was preparing his *Life* of the artist.

'The manner, in which Mr. Romney spent the day, when alone, during the time I remained in his house. He generally rose between seven and eight o'clock, and walked to Gray's Inn to breakfast; on his return, while his servant was dressing his hair, he was employed on some drawing, with which he amused himself till ten o'clock, the hour at which he always had a sitter appointed. His number of sitters was three, four, and sometimes five. At noon he took broth, or coffee, and dined at four, in the most simple manner; after dinner he walked into the country, and always had his sketch book, in which were new thoughts slightly marked, several different ways; on his return home, he had again recourse to his port-folio, and amused himself with the design, he had worked on in the morning, till twelve o'clock, when he retired to rest. This was his custom without any variation, except it rained, while I remained with him. Some of those sketches have great merit, and gave me, at that time, a greater idea of his genius, than even when he painted: he certainly had an idea of having some of them engraved. The cartoons in black chalk, on half length canvas, were all designed at night; and at one time he had an idea of painting in oil colours by candle-light, and was at considerable expence for reflectors; but it did not answer his expectation. Amusements he had none, but what related to his profession, or in the company of his particular friends. In his painting room he seemed to have the highest enjoyment of life, and the more he painted, the greater flow of spirits he acquired.

'His pencil was uncommonly rapid and to see him introduce the

back ground into one of his large pictures, was something like enchantment. He was very anxious concerning the preparation of his colours; the arrangement of his flesh-palette was very curious and simple, and in some of his figures particularly in the arms, it is easy to trace the different gradations of tints, as they stood on the palette. This may be observed in his most delicate flesh, particularly in the arms of a Bacchante, with a dog, sent to Sir William Hamilton, at Naples; in his Serena in the boat; in the left arm of Mr. Henderson, in the character of Macbeth: this last was the most finished of all his flesh colour, and he told me he could go no farther. At this period (1785) his pictures were highly glazed, and though they have more effect, want the delicacy of his former style, which may be found in the half whole length of Wortley Montague, and in the Euphrosyne from Milton's Allegro: the foot of the last he thought nearer to nature than any thing he had ever painted. The head of Creon's daughter is less finished than any other from the same lady;[1] the child is very fine; the drapery was painted in an hour, from a living model, which manner he preferred whenever he could accomplish it. The Lions were by Gilpin, and the picture was purchased by Admiral Vernon. Perhaps the girl spinning is the best picture he painted at this period, he first caught the idea from observing a cobler's wife sitting in a stall. Mr. Curwen told me he gave two hundred guineas for it. Saint Cecilia was the most laboured of all his pieces. His portrait of Lord Thurlow he esteemed as his best. The youngest son of Sir John Trevelyan studied under Mr. Romney for a short time, but died suddenly. Mr. Romney painted a number of portraits for this family. He began a whole length of Mrs. Siddons, and I once told him, the picture was greatly admired, and thought to be superior to that by Sir Joshua Reynolds; he said—"the people know nothing of the matter, for it is not." He has been misrepresented by young artists, as a person, who would not lend any pictures, or give any instructions. This had no foundation in truth, for the fact was, that he was pleased with any request of this nature, but he was often applied to for pictures that he could not lend; yet he always offered some other, that, if the artist only wanted to improve himself, was more for his purpose.'

His son's account of his methods of work shortly after his return from Italy is of great interest and well worth quotation. 'After he had relinquished this picture,'[2] he writes, 'he began to make designs in chalks, sometimes upon a scale as large as life; and innumerable

[1] Lady Hamilton.

[2] 'The Accusation of Susannah by the two Elders.'

studies for his portfolio: thus he was generally occupied till bed-time. During spring he often worked thirteen hours a day, commencing at eight, or earlier, and, except when engaged out, which was not frequently, prolonging his application till eleven at night.

'He mostly painted a gentleman's three-quarters portrait in three or four sittings; especially, if no hands were introduced. The first sitting was three quarters of an hour, the other two about an hour and a half each; and if another was required, it did not exceed three quarters of an hour. During the spring months he frequently had five sitters a day, and occasionally even six. The only time he had for painting fancy-subjects, was in the intervals between the sitters, or when they disappointed him; and having a canvass at hand, he often regarded such a disappointment, as a schoolboy would a holiday. The finishing, however, of his portraits required these intervals; but, being a less pleasing occupation, it was too frequently postponed. This in some measure accounts both for his unfinished portraits, and his fancy-pieces, which, being put aside in haste, were either forgotten, or mislaid. There were, however, other co-operating causes which contributed to increase the number of both.'

Any small annoyance, such as the defection or loss of a model, or the inability to procure some property to be introduced into the composition, was sufficient to cause the easily-discouraged artist to lay aside his canvas, even when the work had been carried well towards completion, and never to take it up again. John Romney mentions several instances of this. In one case a small child, the son of a guardsman, who had served as the nude model for several pictures, among them the 'Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy,' 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions,' and 'Alope,' unfortunately died when Romney was at work upon a 'Group of Children in a Boat drifting out to Sea,' with the nurse on the beach in distress, and, as a consequence, this picture, which promised to be a very delightful one, was abandoned. At the sale of the artist's effects after his death the unfinished canvas was bought by John Hoppner.[1] Upon another occasion the dismissal of a page boy for some misdemeanour brought to an abrupt conclusion an essay in the manner of Gainsborough—'A Shepherd Boy asleep watched by his Dog at the approach of a thunderstorm.' Another picture of this class—'A Young Girl sorrowing over a Fawn just killed by Lightning,' was left unfinished through the lack of the necessary animal for a model. This canvas,

[1] See pages 232 and 354.

which had been carried to a state of great forwardness, was given to Hayley, who never had any hesitation in accepting, and little in demanding, numerous examples of his friend's skill. Still a third picture of this class, which represented 'Two young girls in great distress in consequence of a She-Goat having overturned their milk-pail in its impatience to approach its Kid in their possession,' was placed with its face to the wall, through lack of a goat. Another picture mentioned by his son—'Nature unveiling herself to Shakespeare'[1]—suggested by some lines of Gray in his *Progress of Poesy*, remained unfinished, and perished in the wreck of his works at Hampstead—though in this case the same idea was carried out to completeness in 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions.'

'I could enumerate many other unfinished fancy-pieces in all stages of progress,' his son continues, 'which, from divers impeding causes, were suffered to accumulate in every corner of the house: no picture, however, was ever set aside from any difficulty in the art itself; it was always occasioned by some extraneous circumstance which prevented his progress at the time. I could also mention several other causes which contributed to produce those vast heaps of unfinished portraits that obstructed the passage to his gallery. The chief were the poverty or meanness of the parties to whom the pictures belonged; which might, however, have been obviated had Mr. Romney enforced the first payment: several finished pictures were likewise abandoned for the same reasons.' Another cause which helped to swell this accumulation of unfinished work was the custom the wealthier men of fashion had of taking their mistresses to sit for their portraits; and it sometimes happened that the lady was deserted, or that she had left her lover for a richer gallant, before the likeness was finished. In such cases the new cavalier did not want the portrait, and the old one had no desire to pay for it—so that the artist suffered loss both in time and money.

In other instances lack of money or mere caprice left commissions on his hands. The full-length portrait of Lord Amelius Beauclerk, when a midshipman, which was finished except for the background, remained in the artist's keeping for twenty years, and was knocked down at his sale for the price of an old song. On another occasion he painted a half length of Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, dressed in black, seated on the ground, looking upwards, a commission received from

[1] See page 362.

the Duchess of Beaufort. This, too, remained unclaimed in his studio for some ten years, when the lady suddenly called again, and asked him to repaint the face, so that it might be more in accordance with her age. Romney expressed his readiness to do this, and she gave him one sitting—but never returned, so that the picture was spoiled. Another fine lady who was anxious to be painted by him was the famous Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. As a leader of fashion she had so few moments to devote to so prosaic an amusement as posing to an artist, that she only came three times, with long intervals between each visit. On each occasion Romney began a new picture, and was obliged to abandon it. 'The last time she sat,' says his son, 'was in April, 1791, for a kit-cat portrait: at the same time, also, Lady Elizabeth Foster sat for her portrait of the same size. The latter was paid for by Mr. Crawfurd and sent to him, and I should suppose will now be an ornament of Devonshire House.'[1]

Cumberland also mentions the number of his unfinished portraits, attributing their accumulation chiefly to the painter's own habits. 'Of his portraits,' he writes, 'it would be an endless task to speak. They are every where to be found. They speak sufficiently to his fame, and would have subscribed much more effectually to his fortune, had he not suffered his unfinished pictures to accumulate and lie upon his hands to a most unparalleled extent. Many thousand pounds were thus lost in the course of his business from want of method, which all the remonstrances of his friends could never induce him to adopt. There is, probably, no instance in the art of so much canvass covered, and so much labour wasted, as his magazine of unfinished paintings constantly and painfully exhibited; whilst all the while no artist living had fewer avocations, or more unwearied industry; and though he worked with wonderful facility, yet he would suffer many of his best pictures to remain wanting only a few touches to their draperies or backgrounds, too indolent to put his own hand to what he felt as the drudgery of his art, and too conscientious to suffer other hands to finish for him.'

Romney was liberal, and, indeed, generous, in painting the portraits of his friends as gifts, and put his best work into them. According to his son, when art was in question, money was always a secondary object with him. 'His prices were always too low, and it was only with reluctance that he could at any time be prevailed upon by his friends to raise them higher: yet had he done so in a greater degree and

[1] See page 289.

painted fewer portraits, it would not only have added to his reputation, but increased his profits also.'

'In 1786 he painted portraits to the amount in value of three thousand five hundred and four guineas, when his price was only twenty guineas for a three-quarters.[1] This excess of employment induced him to raise his prices to twenty five guineas, but had he raised it to thirty, it would not have occasioned any diminution of sitters. Immediately on his return from Italy, he commenced with fifteen guineas for a three-quarters, but soon raised it to eighteen, which he continued till 1781. From the beginning of which year to January, 1787, he had twenty; from this to October, 1789, twenty five; and from 1789 to 1793 his price was thirty guineas, when he advanced it to thirty five guineas. The price of a half-length was double that of a three-quarters, and a whole-length double that of a half-length, and the intermediate sizes charged accordingly.'

When in the country Romney worked just as hard as he did in town. He himself acknowledged, in one of his letters, that he went into Sussex, not to play, but to labour. 'In the time that he passed with me in the early years of our intimacy,' remarks his host, 'when his muscular strength was entire, I was both astonished and enlivened by the chearful ardour, and persevereance of his application. I may truly say, that labour was his delight.'

No sooner had he arrived at Eartham than he set Hayley hunting through his library for subjects for pictures, for which, as soon as they were found, he began a multitude of sketches on paper and canvas. On one occasion he took back to London no less than twenty very promising beginnings of pictures in oil, not one of which was ever finished. Hayley tells how he captured one of these years afterwards —the first suggestion of the Fairy Queen and her attendants, from Shakespeare—which turned up unexpectedly when Romney was clearing out a perfect chaos of canvases in Cavendish Square on the eve of his departure for his new house at Hampstead. 'It was a misfortune to him,' says Hayley, 'that he had such an eagerness to accumulate an enormous stock of materials for future works, that he might have said in the quaint expression of Ovid—

"His plenty made him poor."

And he fell at last, like a Titan overwhelmed by the mountainous fragments, that he had piled upon himself.'

[1] See page 51, note.

At Eartham he usually painted or drew all morning, while Hayley put aside his own work in order to read aloud to him; from such works, among others, as Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* or the writings of Raphael Mengs.

Romney was an extraordinarily rapid worker, and while his powers were at maturity his daily average of sitters was more often five than three; indeed, so great was his popularity, and so swift his hand, that he may be said to have painted almost at the rate of one portrait each day. So close was his application that he was in the habit of working on Sundays also, though not at portrait painting. The clerical mind of John Romney looked upon this disregard of the day of rest with keen disapprobation, tempered by a filial affection which caused him to attempt to make the best of matters by suggesting that if a painter were to confine himself to subjects taken from the Scriptures his action might be no more morally wrong than that of a clergyman writing a sermon! He also gives two instances, which came under his personal notice, of his father's rapidity of painting. In one, the portrait of a young man named Pelham, represented as resting on a bank when out shooting, Romney painted a brace of dead partridges in half an hour. 'They are done in a dashing, and apparently slovenly style; but when seen at a proper distance, and in accordance with the general effect, the deception becomes so perfect, that one might almost be tempted to go and take them up.' The second case he mentions is that of the portrait, already described,[1] of the beautiful Miss Shakespeare whom Romney painted before her marriage to Mr. Oliver, afterwards adding to the canvas the portrait of her baby, which he dashed in in half an hour. This picture was sold at Christie's in 1896 for 3100 guineas.

To these instances of rapid workmanship may be added the portrait of his son, which he painted in 'his bold and spirited manner,' in 1794, in a couple of sittings of an hour and a half each, on a 30×25 canvas, which was sold at Christie's exactly one hundred years later for 250 guineas.

When Romney had carefully thought out a picture, so that he could see every detail of it, 'he had a happy facility of rapidly transferring it to the canvass while the impression was still strong on his imagination. He would make a sketch of this kind in oil colours, upon a half-length canvass, in less than an hour: in which the effect of light and shade, the harmony of colouring, the composition of the figures,

[1] See page 135.

and even the drawing and expression, to a certain degree, would be given at once, as it were by magic, in the most bold and dashing manner. If a sitter had disappointed him, he would sometimes take a waste canvass and accomplish one of these sketches before the next came. . . . It is remarkable that he never made finished drawings for his pictures; he only designed the general idea and effect, and executed the minor parts when he painted the picture. He sometimes even painted directly from invention, but never with a copy placed before him.'[1]

In the painting of flesh, Romney's palette, as Robinson noted, was curiously simple. Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, in his recently published *Life* of the painter, has included among his illustrations a reproduction of a sketch by Romney of his own palette set ready for painting. The colours, which are few, run as follows: 'yellow and white; gray, almost white; white and a little vermillion; do., more; do., more; yellow oker, vermillion and white; yellow oker; vermillion; yellow oker and black and white; yellow oker and black, vermillion and black; lake; Terra Siena brown; black; vermillion; yellow oker; vermillion, black and white; do.; gray; do.; and white, light yellow.' A note at the top of the sketch says—'Black and Terra Siena and blue makes a (very fine?) colour.'

Much as he disliked the grinding of colours, sometimes for hours at a time, which he had to do when he was Steele's pupil, the experience was of real service to him in his future practice. He made use of Indian red in a number of his portraits, a fine colour, but apt to result in hot and 'bricky' tones if not managed with great skill, as is easily to be seen in some of his less successful pictures. His pupil Lonsdale attempted to imitate him in his use of this colour, often with poor results, as in the portrait of Sir Philip Francis and others in the National Portrait Gallery.

Romney's somewhat imperious ways with his sitters, and his dilatoriness in finishing commissions, are well and amusingly described in the correspondence of Lady Newdigate, the second wife of Sir Roger Newdigate, fourth baronet, of Arbury, the founder of the Newdigate Prize at Oxford. She was one of the Mundys of Derbyshire, a voluminous letter-writer, very musical, and attractive both in looks and disposition.

In 1790, Lady Newdigate went up to London to sit to Romney for her full-length portrait. Sir Roger also sat to him. The painter

[1] John Romney, p. 129.

lingered for several years over the work, and the pictures were not sent down to Arbury until 1794. In one of her letters to her husband she says:—

'Monday—I am vastly well, and Mr. Barton, who came to town last night, complim^ts my looks greatly, so I hope Mr. Romney will like me to-morrow. They are all mightily dissatisfy'd with my Picture, but as you think you shall like it they shall not make him do it again, unless Lady Templetown and Romney himself wish it.'

'Wednesday—My Picture is still too young and too handsome, but I fancy you will like it. Romney thinks he shall be satisfy'd with one sitting from you, but tells me I must supply your place on Tuesday.'

And again three days later: 'A note from Romney to desire me to dress myself in a white Sattin before I come to him to-day; I have no such thing in town, must get my head dress'd in haste and drive to Pic,[1] and borrow a Gown, which I shall not be able to get into.' Later in the same day she adds: '4 o'clock,—Lady T. was faithless and never came to me, but my sisters approve y^e figure and attitude, which was y^e business to-day. The Borrow'd Gown won't satisfy him, he insists upon my having a rich white Sattin with a long train made by Tuesday, and to have it left with him all summer. It 's y^e oddest thing I ever knew, but I dare not disobey him as you are not here to support me.' On the following Monday she writes: 'I have got a white Gown for Mr. Romney to-morrow.'

The portrait was a long time on hand. She was still sitting to him in London two years later, and writes to Sir Roger as follows:—

'I finish'd yesterday in an anxious minute. You will not disapprove that I w^d not let Romney fix all that Care upon my Brow. I am appointed by Romney at 12 o'clock. Lady Templetown and Mrs. C. Cotton are to meet me. If the former dislikes my Countenance he shall do nothing to y^e face, for y^e last Sitting was thought to improve me.

'4 o'clock—Romney kept me two hours and a half. Lady T. was there almost y^e whole time. I read to them your directions which they seem perfectly to Comprehend and approve. Romney cannot part with y^e drawings till y^e pictures are quite finish'd, but promises to take care of them. I fancy I call'd up very good looks to-day;

[1] Her brother's house in Piccadilly.

MRS. MAXWELL

THE MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH

IN THE COLLECTION OF LADY O'HAGAN

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where they came from I don't know, but my Picture is certainly much improv'd. All seem satisfy'd with it. I have reason to be so, for it is handsomer than ever I was in my life.'

Lady Templetown wrote to Sir Roger about it from Portland Place, June 11th, 1792:—

'I really think he has acquitted himself well in respect to Lady Newdigate. The character of the face is well preserved, and the hair is of an agreable *duskiness* that is neither in nor out of powder, so that I am of opinion that it will please all parties—not that I am willing to make this compromise in order to give up our little *skirmishes* upon the subject, and which I shall rejoice in any opportunity of repeating.'

This portrait, certainly one of the most beautiful full-lengths Romney ever produced, remained on the walls of Arbury until it was lent to the Birmingham Art Gallery by the late General Newdigate-Newdegate in 1900. The lady's home, Arbury, is the scene of that pathetic tale, 'Mr. Gilfil's Love Story,' in George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, in which these portraits are described. In it Arbury is called Cheverel Manor, whilst the Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel of the story are intended to represent Sir Roger Newdigate and his second wife.

Unlike the majority of the portrait painters of his day, Romney was in the habit of completing all parts of his pictures, including the draperies and backgrounds, with his own hands, and very rarely made use of the help of assistants or pupils. An occasional pupil worked in his studio, and he was generally willing to give practical advice to any young man who came to him bent on studying art; but he founded no school of painting, and little of his influence can be traced in the work of the men who immediately followed him.

In his early days at Kendal, before his removal to London, his brother Peter worked under him, and, according to John Romney, Daniel Gardner, of Kendal, received some instruction from him at this time. It was the latter's mother, Mrs. Gardner, a sister of that Alderman Redman of Kendal who followed the same trade as Romney's father, and had business connections with him, who was one of the first to perceive the genius of the young painter, and the drawing Romney made of her was, according to the same authority, his first attempt at portraiture. Daniel Gardner went to London early in life, and studied in the Royal Academy Schools. Sir Joshua Reynolds took a personal interest in him, and he became a fashion-

able painter of small portraits both in oil and crayons, some of which were engraved in mezzotint. He died in 1805, at the age of fifty-five, having retired from practice some years previously.

Another pupil who was with him for some time about 1785, when he was painting Lady Hamilton and many of his finest portraits, was Thomas Robinson, of Windermere, whose description of Romney's habits has been quoted. Robinson moved to Ireland in 1801, and settled in Belfast, where he was patronised by Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, and soon became well known as a portrait painter. In 1808 he removed to Dublin, and was elected president of the Society of Artists. He painted landscapes and subject pictures as well as portraits. His 'Military Procession at Belfast in Honour of Lord Nelson,' is in the Harbour Office in that city, and a large painting of 'The Giant's Causeway' was disposed of by raffle, while his 'Encounter between the King's Troops and Peasants at Ballynahinch' was purchased by the Marquis of Hertford. A portrait 'Group at Dromore Palace in 1807,' from his brush, was exhibited by Viscount Bangor at the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1902-1903. He died in 1810. Out of affection for his old master he christened his son Thomas Romney Robinson. This precocious youth, afterwards celebrated as an astronomer and divine, wrote verses at a very early age, including an 'Eulogy upon Romney' for Hayley's book, which was accompanied by his own portrait engraved from a painting by his father.

James Rawlinson, a Derbyshire artist, also studied under Romney for a time. He is best remembered by his portrait of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the poet, which was engraved by Heath. Rawlinson, who died in 1848, in his eightieth year, only once exhibited in the Royal Academy—'An Old Woman Knitting,' in 1799. Another inmate of his house, already mentioned, was Willoughby, fourth and youngest son of Sir John Trevelyan, whose aspirations to become a painter were abruptly ended by his early death in 1785.

Towards the end of his life, Romney formed plans for adding to his large collection of casts from antique sculpture, and he proposed, when these had been suitably arranged in his new studio, to admit a certain number of young artists, who would form a kind of academy under his own direction, thus giving them an opportunity for the study of ancient art, such as he himself had lacked in his 'prentice days. This scheme remained more or less in the clouds; but, in addition to young Tom Hayley, Romney had three pupils at the close

of his career, all of whom became painters of some distinction. These were Isaac Pocock, James Lonsdale, and Thomas Stewardson.

Isaac Pocock, son of Nicholas Pocock of Bristol, the marine painter, was born in 1782, and entered Romney's studio about 1798 when he was sixteen, where he worked side by side with Tom Hayley. He accompanied his master on the last visit paid to Eartham in February 1799, on which occasion Hayley burst forth into verse in praise of his juvenile talents. On Romney's departure for the North, Pocock worked for a time in Sir William Beechey's studio. He exhibited portraits, historical pictures, and occasional landscapes with figures at the Royal Academy between 1803 and 1818. In 1807 he gained the prize of £100 offered by the British Institution with his 'Murder of St. Thomas à Becket.' His portrait of 'Bartley as Hamlet' is in the Garrick Club, London. In 1815 he succeeded to some property and gave up painting a year or two afterwards, amusing himself in its place by writing for the stage with considerable success, among his pieces being *The Miller and his Men*, a melodrama which long after it had ceased to be acted on the stage remained one of the most popular pieces on the boards of children's toy-theatres until late in the sixties.

James Lonsdale, who was born in Lancashire in 1777, was, perhaps, the best of Romney's pupils. He came to London as a young man, and was an inmate of Romney's house at the same time as Pocock, and also studied in the Academy Schools. He was one of the founders and chief supporters of the Society of British Artists, and became well known as a portrait painter, chiefly of men. A number of these are in the National Portrait Gallery, including one of Joseph Nollekens, R.A.; and there is a portrait-group of himself and his three brothers in the Nottingham Art Gallery. On the death of Opie he purchased that painter's house in Berners Street, where he resided until his own death in 1839.

Romney's last pupil, Thomas Stewardson, was born in Kendal in 1781, and came of a Quaker family. He was with the painter during the few remaining years he passed in the north, moving to London on his master's death. He first exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1803, and between that date and 1825 contributed a number of portraits and some fancy subjects to its exhibitions. In the catalogue for 1811 he is described as Portrait Painter to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales. George III. and his queen sat to him, and his portrait of Grote is in the National Portrait Gallery. More than one of his

sitters, such as E. B. Wilbraham, M.P., in 1815, and Colonel Braddyll in 1816, had been painted by Romney at an earlier date. Stewardson painted the portrait of Mrs. John Romney, which was lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1906 (No. 99), and wrongly described in the first edition of the catalogue as a portrait by George Romney of his wife. This is an effective and animated work, somewhat in the manner of Romney, but also showing the influence of Lawrence. She is represented in a green dress, and a huge poke-bonnet covered with green silk. The colour of the background sky is very reminiscent of his first master. A portrait by him of Miss Millers when a child, in a white dress, gathering flowers, was included in the sale of the late Mr. W. Millers-Rawlinson at Messrs. Christie's, on July 5th, 1902 (No. 122, 50 in. × 40 in.). Stewardson died in 1859.

Another pupil of these last days was Miss M. Barret, the miniature painter, a sister of George Barret, the younger. She exhibited seven portrait miniatures in all at the Royal Academy, in 1797, 1799, and 1800. In the two earlier years her address in the catalogue is given as 'At Mr. Romney's, Cavendish Square,' and she undoubtedly studied under him for a time. In all the biographical notices of her she is said to have been a pupil of Mrs. Mee, a miniaturist of some celebrity, who was much patronised by George IV., when Prince of Wales. Mrs. Mee was the Miss Foldstone, already spoken of, whom Romney assisted when she began to paint in order to support a large family left in poverty by the death of her father, an artist of small capability; and to whom Hayley sat in 1788 for a miniature for which Romney paid. Only three of Miss Barret's miniatures exhibited in the Royal Academy had distinguishing titles, and of these two were of friends of Romney's. In 1797 she sent a 'Portrait of Mr. Walker, Lecturer on Philosophy,' and in 1799 one of 'Mr. French,' who is mentioned in one of Tom Hayley's letters to his father, dated March 27th, 1795: 'Drank tea at Mr. Romney's, with Mr. and Mrs. Flaxman, Mr. French, and Miss Nicholas.' She also painted a miniature of Romney himself in 1798, which was lot 140 in the Romney sale of 1894, when it fetched £8, 5s. In 1800, after Romney had returned to Kendal, she sent her last contribution to the Academy, a miniature group of 'The Duke of Northumberland and family,' from an address close to the old studio, 19 Princes Street, Cavendish Square. Later in life she abandoned miniature painting, and became a member of the Water Colour Society in 1823, and exhibited one or more drawings every season until 1835, dying in the following year.

Birds were her chief subjects, but she also sent studies of fish, fruit, and other objects of still life.

Mention should also be made of Thomas Barrow, a miniaturist and portrait painter, whose address in the catalogue of the Society of Artists' Exhibition in 1770 is given as 'At Mr. Romney's, Great Newport Street.' In the following year his address is 'At Mr. Penny's, York,' so that he may not have been a pupil of Romney's. He exhibited at the Royal Academy until 1819.

Some sixty contemporary engravers produced between them about one hundred and sixty plates after Romney's portraits. Full details of these will be found in Mr. Henry P. Horne's admirable catalogue of 'Engravings after George Romney,' which has been reprinted in Sir Herbert Maxwell's book. In most cases these men engraved only one or two plates after him. John Jones heads the list with a total of twenty-six, followed by John Raphael Smith with twelve, which include the Stafford family group of 'Dancing Children,' 'Mrs. Carwardine and her Child,' 'Lady Hamilton as Nature,' 'The Clavering Children,' 'Miss Cumberland,' 'Serena Reading,' 'Lady Louisa Stormont' (Countess of Mansfield), and the 'Countess of Warwick.' Caroline Watson engraved nine, most of which were done for Hayley's book, and Charles Howard Hodges, James Walker, and William Dickinson seven each, and Valentine Green five. Among the other engravers who worked after him were Bartolozzi, Johann Jacobé, Schiavonetti, J. K. Sherwin, Thomas Cheesman, John Dean, Joseph Grozer, George Keating, Richard Earlom, John Murphy, Robert Dunkerton, James Watson, and William Blake. The latter engraved the 'Shipwreck' scene, for the purposes of Hayley's *Life of Romney*, and the portrait of Cowper for the same writer's *Life* of that poet. A list of the more modern mezzotints after Romney will be found in Appendix III.

PART III: HIS ART

XXII

FEW English painters of the eighteenth century owed less to the teaching of others than George Romney. Until he had reached his twenty-first year, his art slowly struggled to find expression as best it could, unaided by outside influences. At an early age he showed unmistakable signs of the passion which was to consume him for the remainder of his days, but he received little help from his small world of Dalton, beyond words of encouragement from one or two of his father's friends; and what little knowledge he gained was the result of laborious copying of the few engravings which came within his reach, and from attempts at portraiture whenever a good-natured companion could be persuaded to sit. His friend Williamson, the watchmaker, certainly encouraged him in his ambitions, and is said to have given him some little instruction, but it is doubtful whether he had the ability to teach him anything of value. We are not told that his father looked upon his desire to become a painter with any favour. The times were bad, and the limner's trade was much more precarious than that of cabinet-making; and it was only when the youth's proclivities for brush instead of chisel had become too marked to be put aside carelessly as unworthy of consideration, and when one or two of the elder Romney's associates strongly urged the step, that George was allowed to follow the path along which his inclinations led him so insistently.

It is difficult to decide how much or how little knowledge he gained during his short apprenticeship to Christopher Steele, an apprenticeship which came to a somewhat abrupt conclusion two years after he had entered upon it. What ability Steele possessed it is not easy to say, as his portraits are buried in oblivion, and could now only be unearthed by much patient searching among the houses in the North Country. He was not, according to John Romney, the mere 'itinerant dawber' Richard Cumberland called him, and he probably had the

skill, though, unfortunately, not the patience, to give his pupil a good grounding in the rudiments of art, and to hand on to him some of the lessons he had himself learnt from Van Loo.

Thomas Robinson, to whose description of Romney's habits at a later period of life reference has been already made, begins that account with a few words about his master's master:—'Count Steel (the master of Romney) was not so contemptible a painter, as one would suppose, from Mr. Cumberland's account. The giving him all the praise he deserved, can detract nothing from our admirable artist, who often mentioned, that he drew with correctness: and described him to me, as '*a neat painter.*' He once shewed me his portrait by himself which he said was as good as the portraits of Hudson. I have conversed with many people, that were intimately acquainted with Steel, who all described him as an "*ingenious*, inoffensive man"; and old Mr. Wright, the cabinet-maker, (with whom Mr. Romney worked for some time at Lancaster) related to me the liberal manner in which Steel relinquished his engagement, that "he might not retard the progress of a mind, that, he was sure, would do wonders." On my return to Windermere, after leaving Mr. Romney, I had the curiosity to see some of Steel's pictures, which were freely painted in rather a broad manner; the drawing was correct, and in one of them was the best imitation of a lace cap and apron I remember to have seen.'

While with the 'Count,' however, the young man gained one invaluable experience, which stood him in good stead throughout the whole of his career. He became expert in the grinding and mixing of colours, and his palette, though a restricted one compared with that of certain of his rivals, remained always a sound one from a technical point of view. This is proved by the durability of his pictures. Many of them are almost as fresh and pure in colour as on the day when they were painted. Steele certainly taught him the proper use of paints, and the method of handling a brush, but in other respects seems to have left him to his own devices. Romney never had the advantage, so necessary if a man's art is to achieve its fullest expression, of a thorough training in the use of the pencil, and, in consequence, his painting always suffered from the lack of it, in spite of his strenuous efforts at a later date to improve himself in this direction. Composition, of course, was not to be expected from Steele, and what little insight the younger man obtained into this most difficult side of his art, came from his constant habit of making copies of engravings, whenever he could scrape together the necessary pence for their

purchase. For this reason many of the earliest of his pictures mentioned by his biographers owe their origin to his study of some Dutch or Flemish scene of village merry-making, or some Italianised landscape after Poussin or Berghem.

The pictures he painted when he had just begun his career as a fully fledged and independent artist naturally gave but few indications of the exceptional powers he was to manifest later on. His tuition had been so slight and his period of study so short that too much is not to be expected from these first faltering attempts to express himself, and to give adequate and life-like resemblance to his sitters. Happily he did not lack kind friends who were ready to help him by having their portraits painted, and, in most cases, they were well satisfied with the result.

His first patrons, already mentioned, were Mr. and Mrs. Walter Strickland, of Sizergh, of whom he painted small three-quarter length portraits.[1] These are marked by careful workmanship, and painstaking efforts to render the details of the costumes faithfully. Walter Strickland is shown to the knees, in an elaborately laced coat and long waistcoat, one hand resting on his hip, and the other, palm upwards, on a stone parapet. Mrs. Strickland (Cecilia Townley) poses as a shepherdess with a crook, in one of those low-necked costumes in which Lely delighted to dress his beauties. The painting of the head is good and pleasing, and the hands have been studied with care. This artificial setting may perhaps have been suggested to him by one of the old family portraits, still hanging to-day at Sizergh, by such painters as Lely and Rigaud, portraits of which Romney was allowed to make copies, a rare advantage to one whose opportunities of studying closely the methods of the older masters had been so few.[2] A small canvas of about the same date as the Strickland portraits, exhibited by Messrs. Shepherd Bros. in 1905, represents the painter's wife. It is careful and smooth in execution and in the rendering of the draperies, a puce-coloured dress with white sleeves, and, indeed, in all parts of the picture, bears a close resemblance to the Sizergh examples. (See Plate I.)

At the beginning of his career Romney painted a number of small full-lengths. Among these are portraits of two other members of the Strickland family—Charles, with fishing-rod in hand, by the side of a stream;[3] and the Rev. William Strickland, seated in his study, by a

[1] Still at Sizergh Castle, near Kendal, in the possession of Sir Gerald Strickland.

[2] See page 26.

[3] See page 27.

table, covered with books, an antique bust, and reading-desk, and a large globe on the ground. All the details in the latter picture are painted with an attempt at careful realism. The figure, which is lighted from above, is a little squat and wooden, a fault to be noticed in other early canvases containing small full-length figures, such as the scene from *Tristram Shandy*, already described, in which Dr. Slop, all splashed with mud from his fall in the lane, is entering the Shandean parlour. It displays some sense of humour, but the drawing of the figures gives no great promise of future excellence. The original, however, cannot now be traced, and this 'squatness' may be due in part to the indifferent engraver employed by Hayley. This picture and others taken from Sterne, now lost or hidden away in some mansion with the painter's name forgotten, were highly praised by Romney's intimate friends.

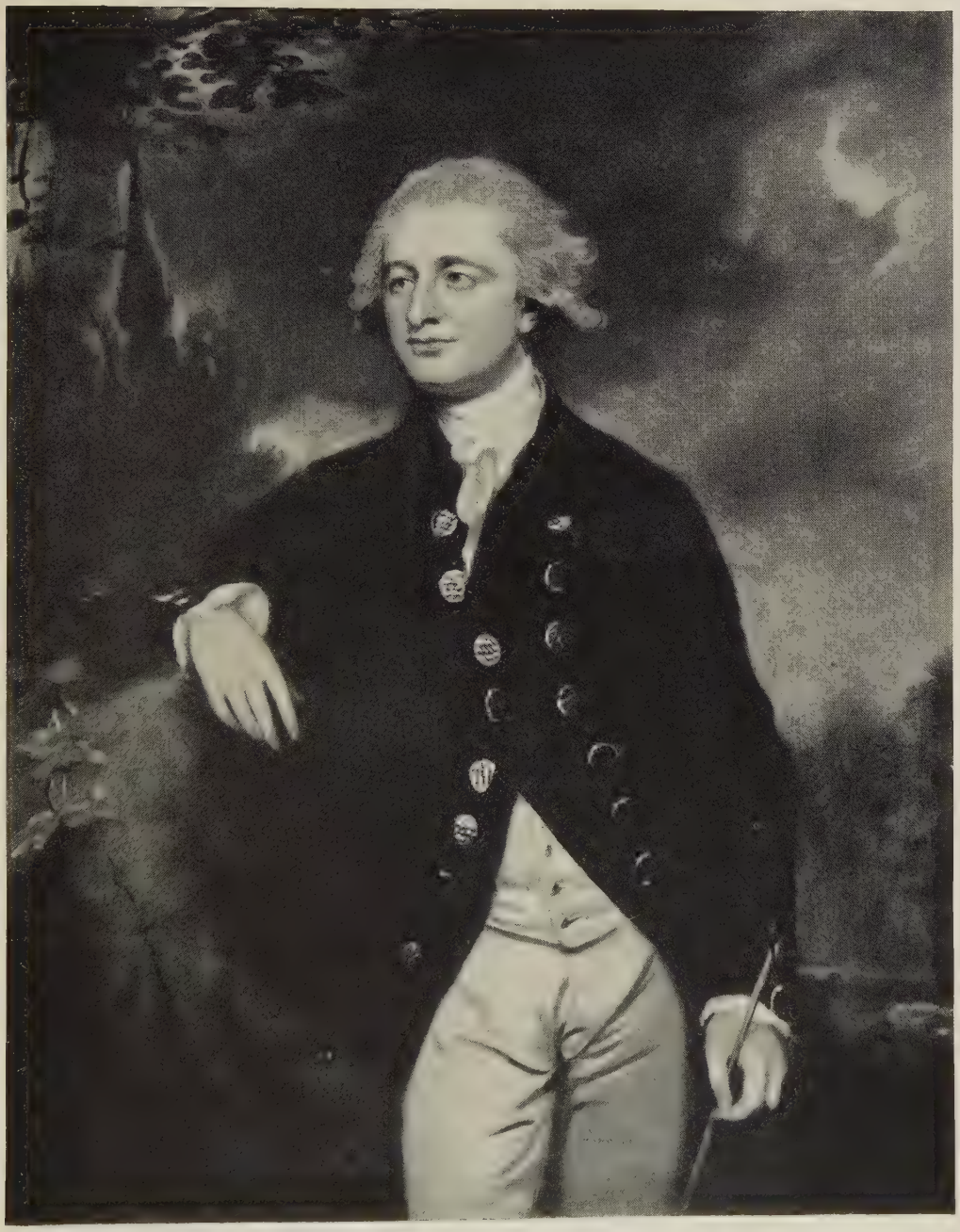
Another of these early small full-lengths has recently found a home in the National Gallery, the portrait of Jacob Morland, of Cappelthwaite, bequeathed by Colonel John Morland. It represents a young man of some eighteen years, in a blue-green dress with gold lace and buttons, black and white stockings, and a gold-laced three-cornered hat. His hair, slightly powdered, is dressed in two tight curls over each ear. He is standing in a landscape, holding a long gun in his left hand, the butt of which rests on the ground, with a brown and white pointer at his feet. A mass of rock rises on the left, and in the distance his mansion is seen, with the Cumberland mountains in the background. The whole has been painted with extreme care, but the general effect is hard and wooden, and the colour, in which a bluish hue predominates, is unpleasant. It is the kind of work, careful but quite uninspired, of which many third-rate painters of that day were capable, and it is difficult to see in it any suggestion of Romney's later style.

He also painted various members of the Wilson family, of Dallam Tower, which have been described on an earlier page. All these portraits are carefully painted, with the details of the costumes elaborated with a painstaking striving after accuracy.

On parting with Steele, in 1757, Romney returned to Kendal, where he remained for some time, after which, in 1760 or 1761, he pitched his tent in Lancaster for the greater part of a year, where he was very busily occupied. In a letter to Adam Walker, after the latter had returned to his school at Preston, printed by Hayley for the purpose of refuting the statement that the painter was 'utterly illiterate,' he gives a list

of twenty-seven portraits upon which he was then engaged. This list, which would have been an invaluable aid towards the discovery and identification of much of his early work, the self-complacent poet omitted as of no particular interest, little dreaming how gladly the modern student would give up twenty-seven lines of the author's too copious verse, which meanders through his volume in a never-ceasing stream, for the names of those now-forgotten sitters. A systematic search through the older mansions in the district might be successful in bringing some of them to light again.

If we can ascribe to this first Lancastrian period—for he was there again some years later, both in 1765 and in 1767—such portraits as the Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Rawlinson, reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, and the four of the Collingwood family exhibited in Messrs. Shepherd Bros'. gallery in 1905, it becomes evident that the young painter was making rapid strides in his profession. These are all half-lengths, in which the drawing of the heads is more life-like and assured, while greater animation and character is shown in the faces. The dignified, strongly-marked features of Mr. Rawlinson are a great advance upon the more laboured but expressionless countenance of Mr. Walter Strickland. More than one itinerant painter of the time could have accomplished the latter, but in the Rawlinson portraits there are clear proofs that an artist of unusual ability was beginning to manifest himself. The Mrs. Rawlinson, in her quaker-like costume of white cap fastened under the chin, and almost covering the hair, and large white fichu hiding most of the dress, displays similar qualities, and is evidently a faithful portrait of a comely, middle-aged lady. Both these pictures remain in the possession of Mr. Charles Walker, of Bretargh Holt, Kendal, their descendant, as well as a third portrait of the same date, of their son, Abram Rawlinson, who became one of the leading citizens of Lancaster and its representative in Parliament. Romney painted him when he was a young man of about twenty-one. He is represented standing in a landscape, his left arm resting on a rough stone pillar or parapet. He wears a dark coat and a short wig, and the left side of the face is in deep shadow. This, too, is a very straightforward and dignified piece of work, in which the manly qualities of the sitter are excellently rendered. 'Mr. and Mrs. William Lindow,' now in the National Gallery, may be grouped with these portraits, though probably ten or twelve years later in date, for the lady was Abigail, daughter of Abram Rawlinson the elder, with whom her husband was in partnership in Lancaster.



SIR WILLIAM LEMON OF CARCLEW

IN THE COLLECTION OF COLONEL TREMAYNE

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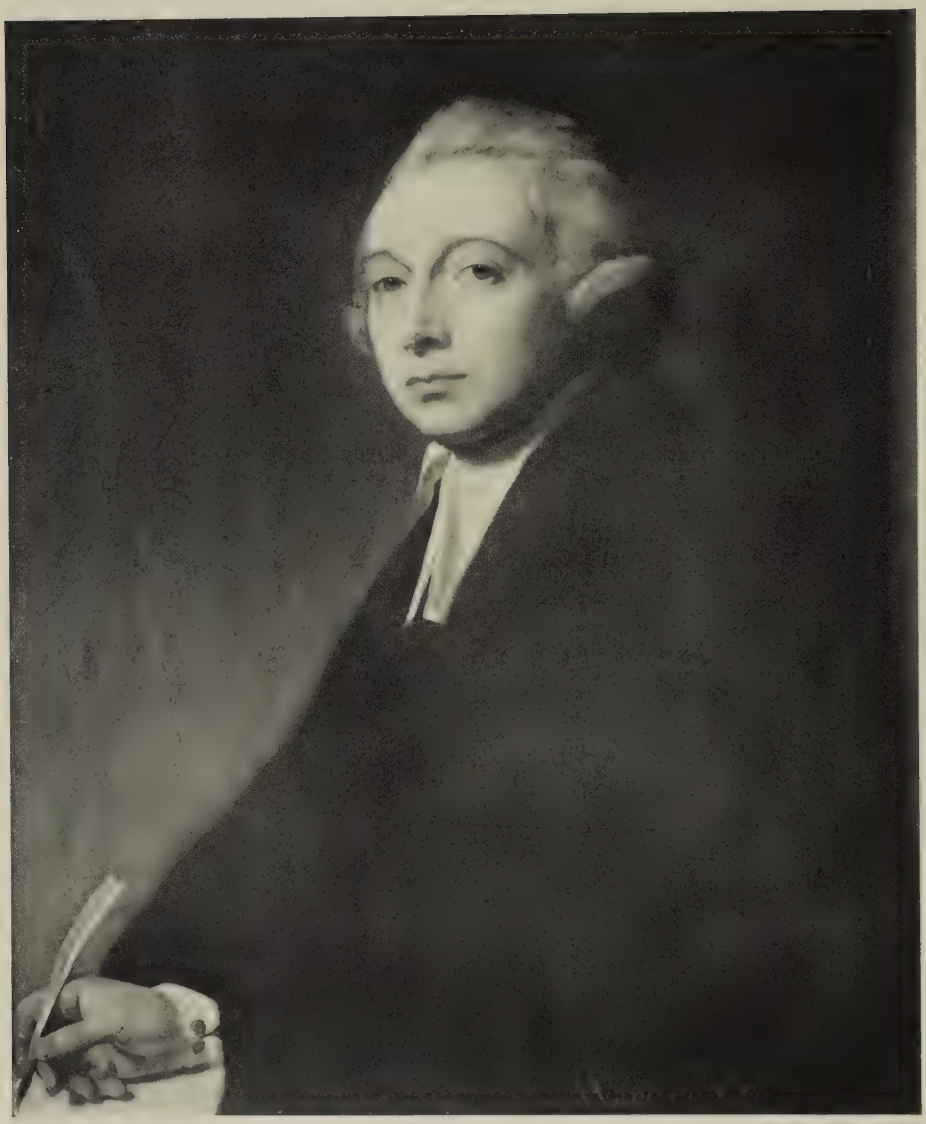

JOHN OGLANDER, DD.

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE WARDEN OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

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This picture is too well known to need description. The Romney and Rawlinson families became connected in later years, the late Mrs. Rawlinson, of Graythwaite, being a grand-daughter of the artist.

The portrait of Mrs. Collingwood (see Plate XXIII.) closely resembles that of Mrs. Rawlinson, both in handling and in costume. A white cap of the same pattern covers her dark hair, and a white fichu, more frilled but otherwise the same, is crossed over the breast. The ribbons and other parts of the dress of rose and green shot silk are painted with evident care, but with much more freedom and grace than in such a portrait as the 'Cecilia Townley' at Sizergh, and give promise of the dexterity which, later on, was to distinguish his painting of draperies. The portraits of her little boy and girl are charming. (See Plates XXIV. and XXV.) They are not faultless in drawing, the head in each case being too big in proportion to the body, but they are true precursors of those delightful pictures of children which Romney painted with such real sympathy and insight at all periods of his life. The little girl wears a green frock and white muslin pinafore, and the boy is dressed in a green jacket, white linen collar, and cambric ruffles at the wrist, and holds an open book in his hands. On the back of the canvas of the 'Mrs. Collingwood' is written 'For Mr. George Romney, at the King's Arms, Lancaster.' These three portraits, together with that of Mr. Collingwood, were originally in the possession of Lady Pringle, *née* Grace Pye, of Richmond, Yorkshire, from whom they descended by bequest to Miss Emily Purvis, of Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset, by whose kind permission they are reproduced in this book. They were all exhibited in Messrs. Shepherd Bros. Gallery in 1905.

Another early portrait, a young man in a dark skull-cap, of high forehead and reflective countenance, in the possession of Mr. H. Dawson-Greene, represents Romney's life-long friend, Thomas Greene, the solicitor. This, too, is a dignified and expressive work, and, as in the portrait just described, the colour-scheme is subdued but pleasant, It is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book.

Two other early examples, representing members of the Fenton Cawthorne family, are still hanging in Fenton Cawthorne House, Gisburne, and belong to Mr. A. W. Wingate Saul. Both are full-lengths, one being the portrait of a lady, with dark hair, wearing a red silk dress on which the reflections of the light are cleverly shown, while the details of the lace with which it is trimmed are very carefully

painted. She holds up the gown with her left hand, and with the right hand points to a squirrel which is seen among the foliage of the background. The picture is conceived in the manner of the older school of Lely and Kneller. The second canvas contains the portraits of two boys, of about the ages of ten and twelve, each dressed in a long dark coat, knee breeches, and white stockings, and both looking towards the spectator. The one on the left is holding a pigeon in the hollow of his right hand, while his left rests on his brother's shoulder. The latter holds out both hands filled with corn for the bird to eat. In the right-hand corner of the foreground there is a carefully drawn liver-and-white spaniel, looking up at them, which closely resembles the dog in the Morland portrait in the National Gallery. There is a curtain in the background.

These portraits are probably likenesses of the wife and sons of John Fenton Cawthorne, who was a Colonel of the Westminster regiment of the Middlesex Militia, and represented Lincoln in Parliament for thirteen years, afterwards sitting as member for Lancaster for seventeen years. He was expelled from the House for some fraudulent practices in 1796, and died at the age of seventy-nine in 1826.

Though one of the chief characteristics of these early portraits is the careful manner in which they are painted, Romney quickly developed a great facility of handling, which eventually enabled him to produce an extraordinary number of canvases. During the five years he worked in the north, before moving to London in 1762, he never lacked constant employment, and as the fees he received were so insignificant, it was necessary, if he meant to live decently, and support a wife, however frugal she might be, and two small children, that he should not only work hard but should train himself to paint portraits rapidly, and to finish a likeness in one or two sittings of a few hours each. He thus developed methods of painting which he retained more or less unaltered until the end of his career.

So wholly wrapped up in his art that all other matters were treated with more or less indifference, and actuated by the sole desire of rapid improvement, London had been in his thoughts as the ultimate goal of his ambitions long before he was able finally to realise them. While in the provinces he had no opportunity of intercourse with fellow-painters of ability; but in London he found himself in the very centre of artistic affairs, so that his perceptions were at once quickened, and the range of his ideas enlarged. His sensitive and suspicious nature did not permit him at any time of his life to make many friends, nor,

indeed, to make any friend easily, but he soon became fairly intimate with a few artists, more particularly the miniature painters Jeremiah Meyer and Ozias Humphry. There is no evidence to show that he worked in the St. Martin's Lane Academy, but possibly he may have made some use of the opportunities it gave to a poor man of studying from the life without heavy expense.

That London impelled him to greater efforts than he had attempted previously, is shown by his setting to work, almost immediately, upon a large composition of life-sized figures, 'The Death of General Wolfe.' This, his first exhibited picture, which led to the unpleasant dispute already mentioned, enabled him to place his foot on the first step of the ladder of fame, and so make his name known to a wider audience than he had hitherto reached.

A modern critic, writing in defence of Sir Joshua, speaks of 'the lucky and good-for-nothing Romney, who takes what little he has from Reynolds and spoils it.'

Such a statement is exaggerated and unfair. Romney in those early London days undoubtedly owed something to the example of Reynolds. He could hardly have avoided the spell. Indeed, with the exception of Gainsborough, there were few of his contemporaries who did not owe something of their success to their study, and even imitation, of the man, then approaching the zenith of his powers, who was the undisputed head of the English school of painting, and who had given by his example a new impetus to portraiture. Reynolds' art, as displayed in his contributions to the annual exhibitions, must have come as a revelation to Romney, who, until then, had seen nothing to approach it in distinction, vitality, or beauty of colour.

At the Exhibition of the Society of Artists in 1762, he would have the opportunity of studying three such fine examples as the full-length of 'Lady Elizabeth Keppell,' 'Lady Waldegrave and her Daughter, as Dido embracing Cupid,' and 'Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy'; while Gainsborough had sent from Bath his full-length of 'Mr. Poyntz.' In the following year Reynolds exhibited, among others, 'The Ladies Montagu,' and a half-length of 'Nelly O'Brien'; in 1764, 'Lady Sarah Bunbury,' and in 1765 the still more famous portrait of the same fair lady 'sacrificing to the Graces.' Such works as these must have widened Romney's horizon, opening his eyes to greater possibilities in portraiture than he had hitherto dreamt of, and it was only to be expected that their influence should make itself apparent in his work. It is to be seen in such pictures as his 'Sisters con-

templating on Mortality,' exhibited in 1767, and considered of sufficient importance to be engraved by Dunkerton in 1770.

A still earlier example of this influence is to be found in the portrait of 'Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle,' in the Earl of Lathom's collection at Lathom House, Ormskirk, which, according to his lordship's catalogue, was painted in 1764, and is very possibly that portrait of 'A Young Lady,' which was exhibited by Romney at the Free Society of Artists in that year. It was probably painted shortly before her marriage, when she was Miss Mary Bootle. (See Plate XXVI.) In this picture there is not only an evident attempt to paint in the method of Reynolds, but also a recollection of the less natural school of the preceding century. The lady is clad in a white dress, cut low, and crossed over the breast, with a pale blue sash ending in a pink tassel. Over it she wears a cloak of pink velvet, open in front, with sleeves cut in a 'Vandyck' pattern, and the whole trimmed with ermine. Her right hand rests on the head of a greyhound, which is springing up against her, in much the same way as the dog in 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante,' and even more badly drawn than the animal in the latter picture. She has brown hair, and is standing in a landscape facing the spectator. The background has darkened considerably, but an urn can be discerned on the left, and some classical ruins, with a broken arch from which some trees are growing, in much the same manner as in the made-up scenery in the 'Two Sisters' picture. It is of great interest as showing of what Romney was capable at the age of thirty, after a year or two of intercourse with his fellow-painters in the metropolis.

Another case, considerably later in date, in which the Reynolds influence is to be detected, is the portrait of Lady Napier. This lady sat to both Reynolds and Romney, though the whereabouts of only one of the two portraits is known to-day. This was exhibited in the Birmingham Art Gallery, in 1900,[1] as by Romney, and has since been illustrated in the last volume of Mr. Algernon Graves's elaborate book on Sir Joshua as a genuine Reynolds, while it is also catalogued by Messrs. Humphry Ward and Roberts as an undoubted work from Romney's brush. Another fine example, still later in date, the portrait of 'Mrs. Drummond Smith,' was lent by the Marchioness of Northampton to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1873 as a Romney, and has been recently reproduced in Part IV. of the 'Great

[1] By the Rev. J. W. Napier Clavering. It was reproduced in the illustrated edition of the Birmingham catalogue.

Masters' series[1] as by Romney when under the influence of Reynolds, but it is now rightly given by the critics to Sir Joshua. In style this lovely portrait bears a striking resemblance to the 'Lady Elizabeth Foster,' by Reynolds, in the Duke of Devonshire's collection, in connection with which it is interesting to note that the Rev. John Romney, when speaking of the confusion which might afterwards arise between some of the works of the two artists, largely owing to Romney's refusal to exhibit, so that his pictures, even in his own day, were practically unknown, mentions in particular a portrait of this lady painted by his father for the Duke, referred to on an earlier page,[2] which he thought might be easily mistaken in the future for a Reynolds. The picture in the Devonshire collection is, however, an undoubted work by Sir Joshua, whereas no trace can now be found of Romney's portrait. From such examples as these, it is evident that Romney was not only unconsciously influenced by his great rival, but at times made a more deliberate attempt to paint in his manner.

His visit to Paris in 1764 was too short to have any marked effect upon his painting, although his earlier biographers note an improvement on his return to London. His imagination, however, must have been greatly stimulated by the many fine examples of the old masters to which he had access in the Orleans and other collections. He is said to have devoted particular attention to the study of Rubens, but it is difficult to detect any direct traces of this influence in his work.

[1] Published by Mr. William Heinemann, 1903.

[2] See page 270.

of heaviness, while his drawing and the modelling of his flesh were both more carefully considered. Finally, his studio being less crowded than it afterwards became, he gave more time and thought to each individual effort, and being on trial, as it were, exerted himself to the utmost to do justice to his powers.

The noble group of portraits of the members of the Stafford family, upon which he was at work at intervals between 1776 and 1782, is, in many ways, the finest manifestation of his genius. He painted, of course, many individual portraits which were as fine, though rarely finer, in quality, but as a series of representations of the members of one family, still remaining in the house for which they were painted,[1] the Stafford pictures may be looked upon as one of the most complete expressions of what was best in English portraiture in the eighteenth century.

The first of them in point of date is the large group of 'Children dancing in a Ring,' one of the most considerable compositions of several figures he ever attempted, and certainly the finest. In this he has succeeded, where both he and his rivals often failed, in painting a portrait group which is dignified in composition; an artistic 'whole,' its several parts bound together in artistic unity, not merely a number of well-painted figures placed together in somewhat haphazard fashion. It is, in fact, a fine picture, as well as a beautiful series of portraits. In quality of flowing line and skilful rendering of form it stands out with an accent of distinction, holding its own with any painting of the English school of Romney's day. These lovely children, dancing in a round, seem alive with graceful motion, as their tripping feet skim over the grass. The movement suggests, with complete success, the measure of one of those stately peasant dances which so charmed Romney on his first arrival in Italy, and, no doubt, directly inspired this picture. He speaks of them with delight more than once in his diary.[2] (See Plate v.)

Some such dance as the one he saw in Genoa, which caused him to imagine himself in Arcadia, must have been in his mind when he painted the Stafford children. The colouring is exceptionally good and rich in tone, and the figure of the elder step-sister, with tambourine held above her shoulder, is not only one of the most beautiful and 'classical' figures Romney ever designed, but the painting of her ivory-white draperies, with their simple, flowing lines, is perfect.

[1] They have been removed recently from Trentham Hall to Stafford House.

[2] See page 64.

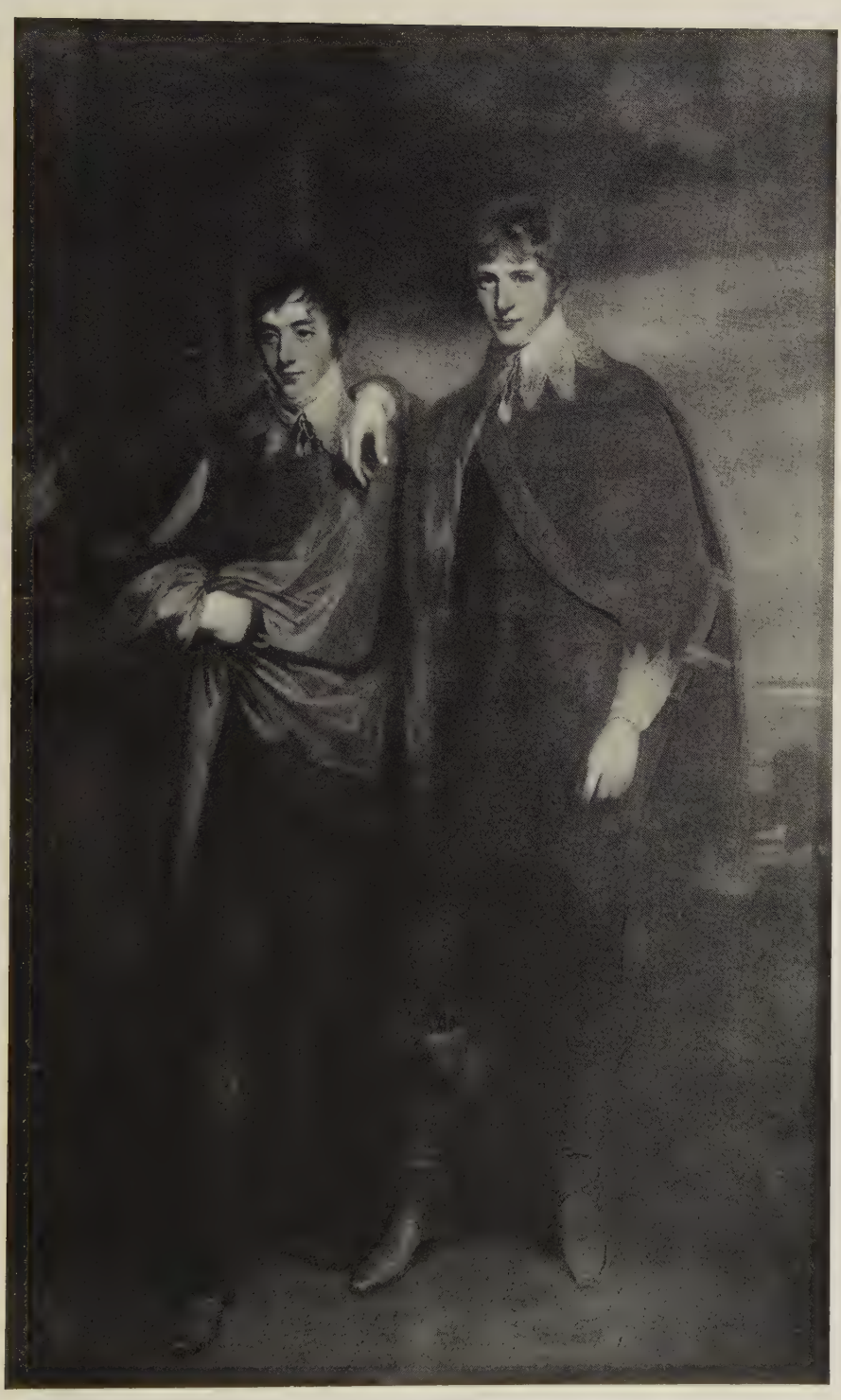
Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower says very truly, that 'Romney could never have painted these dancing figures with such force and splendour of colour, had he not studied the great Italian Colourists in Venice; we know how he loved to watch the peasants of the south of Europe dancing in the summer evenings: in his great group at Trentham he has given us, though not peasants, some of the most beautiful creatures of Nature, instinct with the joy of existence, as sportive as the fairies of Titania and Oberon's Court. The almost Grecian grace of the draperies in this work of the painter's is made free by the unconventionality of the costumes, and in this Romney showed his exquisite taste. . . . Especially noticeable is the drapery of beautiful ivory white in the figure of Lady Anne. No other portrait-painter of the time, not the great Sir Joshua himself, ever painted such perfect and refined drapery as this; so gracefully does it cling to the form, and so beautifully are its lines broken and blended at her feet. The colouring of the work is throughout harmonious and happy. Romney has indulged here freely in his favourite olive greens and ambers, mauve and well-toned vermilion; the brilliancy of the dresses harmonises well with the deep green of the foliage, and the tender hue of an evening sky; still more beautiful than dresses and drapery are the fresh and brilliant complexions of these almost breathing children, and the gloss and lustre of their fair and silky hair.'

Among the best of the Stafford Romneys are the two fine three-quarter-length portraits of the youthful George Granville, afterwards first Duke of Sutherland, and his sister Caroline, Countess of Carlisle. The former is one of the few examples painted by Romney in which he has clothed his sitter in a costume of the Van Dyck period. The high-bred elegance of the carriage of this figure, the dignity, almost insolence, of the expression, have been rendered with real insight into character, and the painting of the amber-brown velvet of the doublet, and the claret-coloured cloak, is both beautiful in colour and masterly in technical ability. The picture of the Countess is one of the painter's most sweet and refined portraits of lovely, graceful womanhood, in its first and freshest beauty. The decision and energy of his touch in the modelling of the face give it that sculpturesque appearance which is so characteristic a mark of many of his canvases at this period, while the clinging salmon-pink draperies, which define yet conceal the girlish figure, are reminiscent of some Greek gem. (See Plates VI. and VII.) Equal

beauty, and still greater delicacy in the modelling of the features mark the bust-portrait of the young man's wife, the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, while the full-length of the father, Earl Gower, in all the grandeur of his Garter robes, at least equals any of the 'state' portraits Romney attempted later in his career.

Another fine series of family portraits from his brush still remains in Lathom House, Ormskirk. Unlike the Stafford portraits, which all belong to one period of Romney's art, more than twenty years intervene between the first and last of the Lathom pictures, all of which are reproduced in this book through the kindness of the Earl of Lathom. The earliest of them, that of Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle, painted in 1764, has been described on an earlier page. The group of 'Mrs. George Wilson and her Daughter' is one of the simplest and most beautiful examples of his 'mother and child' pictures, painted soon after his return from Italy. The lady is seated in profile to the right, with her head bent down so that her forehead is resting on her little girl's head. The child is standing behind, with arms folded on her mother's left knee, the lower part of her body being hidden by the dress. Mrs. Wilson's left arm encircles her daughter, and her right is resting on her own knee, the attitude being a very natural and graceful one. Her dress, cut low in the neck, and falling in plain, simple folds, is of a slate-grey colour, with a brown girdle, while a dark olive-green cloak—one of Romney's favourite colours at this period—hangs over her left shoulder and down her back, and is brought round and flung across her lap, completely covering the lower part of her body. Her dark brown hair is plainly dressed, and her eyes are cast down, with a somewhat sad expression. The child, with fair hair, cut short and falling over the forehead, and a plain white frock with the sleeves turned up above the elbows, looks straight at the spectator, with a sweet, far-away expression. This picture, which is in fine condition, is one of his most sculpturesque groupings, and is very tenderly and gracefully painted and designed, while the colour, though low in tone throughout, is singularly harmonious and beautiful. It is, indeed, an excellent example of Romney's first post-Italian manner, when the influence of the great masters was still freshly upon him; and it embodies what was best, most natural, and most original in his art.

The pair of three-quarter length portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wilbraham Bootle, in the prime of life, painted in 1784, again show him at his finest. Although the more direct influence of his Italian studies is now less apparent, more particularly in the design and



BERKELEY AND KEPPEL CRAVEN

IN THE COLLECTION OF LADY O'HAGAN

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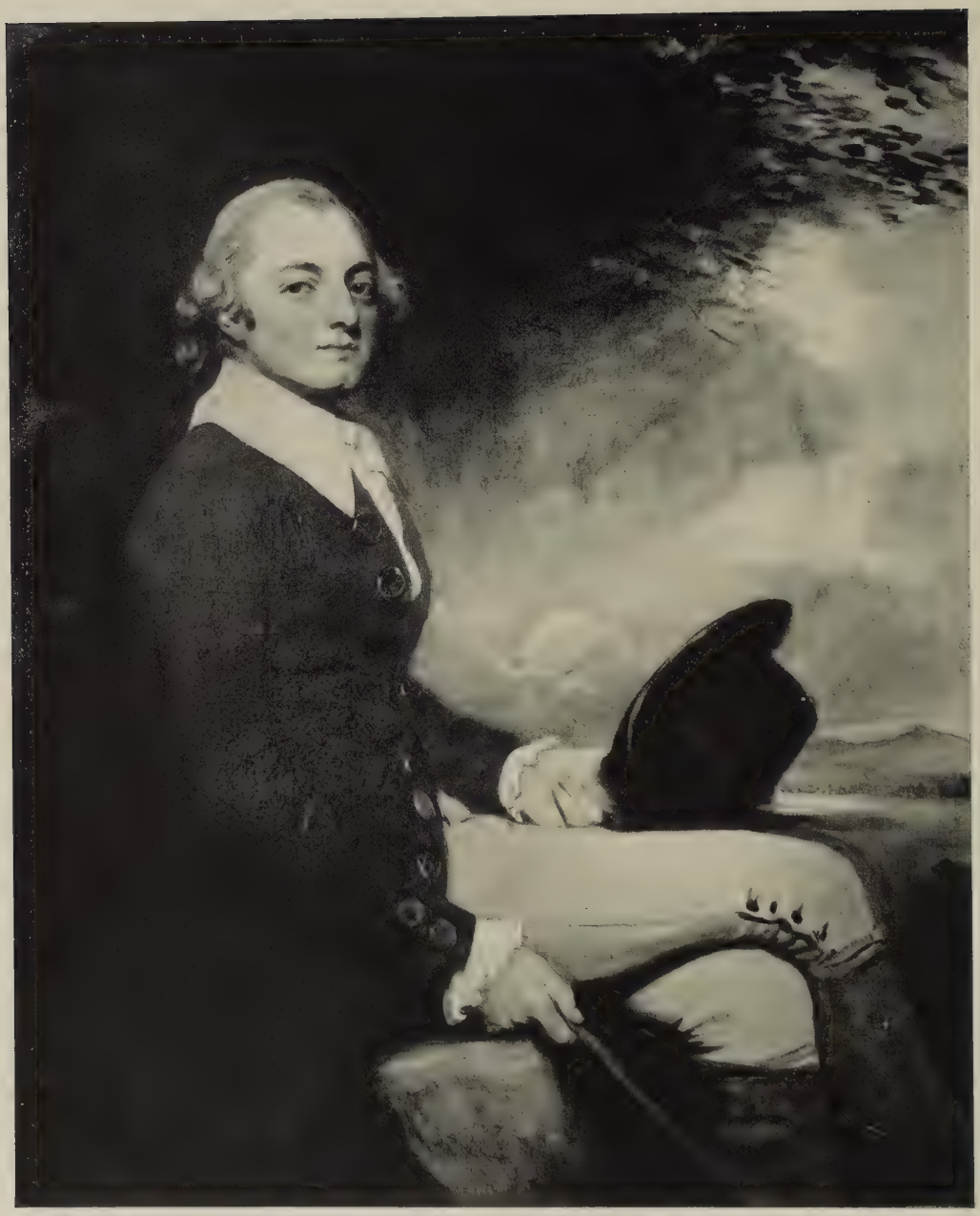

THOMAS GROVE OF FERNE

IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR WALTER GROVE, BT.

Page 334

the arrangement of the draperies, the immense impetus given to his art by his sojourn abroad is still more evident. It is more matured, especially in craftsmanship, and richer in colour; freer in handling, but yet careful and restrained when compared with his later work, which was often slovenly and perfunctory, and both more rapid and less truthful in the painting of the accessories. Mrs. Bootle is shown full-face, seated. A white silk scarf is wound round her powdered hair, from which one ringlet falls upon her neck. Her pale blue dress is cut low, and filled in with transparent white silk. She wears an elaborate caped cloak of white watered silk, trimmed with dark brown fur, and her hands, covered with long grey gloves, are hidden in a large fur muff. The background consists of a pillar and curtains on the right, and on the left a glimpse of sea and coast above a stone parapet, on which a classical urn is standing. (See Plate XXVIII.)

Her husband is shown seated in a landscape, with body turned to the right, and his rather fat face, of ruddy complexion, looking towards the spectator. He is wearing a grey bob-wig tied with a black ribbon, a puce-coloured coat, yellow-brown waistcoat buttoned up to the neck, dark breeches, and white silk stockings. He holds his hat in his left hand, and a gold-headed cane in his right. The arm-chair in which he is posed is covered with olive-green embroidery. It is one of Romney's most vigorous and direct representations of a substantial man of mature years. (See Plate XXIX.)

The full-length group of their two young sons, Edward Wilbraham and Randle Bootle, in a landscape, is some years later in date. The younger of the two is seated on a high rock on the left, looking down at his brother, and holding a book in his hands. The elder boy stands with his right elbow resting on the boulder, and a long gun in his left hand. He wears a long-tailed red coat with gilt buttons, fastened across the waist, pale brown breeches, and high boots; while his brother has a black coat, breeches of a darker brown, and white silk stockings and shoes with silver buckles. They have flung their hats upon the ground. Each of them wears his hair long upon the shoulders, the elder boy's being of a lighter chestnut-red than his companion's. The background, which is very sketchily indicated, and rather empty and poor, represents high rocks with trees on their summit on the right, and a big waterfall in the centre, with hills and clouds beyond, and on the left some tree-trunks above the rocks by which the boys are grouped. Both of the youths are handsome,

with a sweet expression of face, and the canvas is in many ways one of Romney's most notable studies of childhood. (See Plate xxx.)

Another collection which is rich in family portraits by Romney is that of the Earl of Crewe, at Fryston Hall, Yorkshire. Excellent photographs of five of them were taken by Messrs. Braun in 1905. The most interesting of these is the three-quarter length of Miss Hannah Milnes, which was painted in the period more immediately under discussion in this chapter. She is represented as seated on some steps at the base of a stone pillar, with her head leaning on her right arm, which rests upon the stone work, the hand hanging down and the fingers touching her breast. Her body is turned to the left, and in her left hand she holds a mask which she has just taken off. She looks full-face at the spectator, with lips slightly parted in a faint smile, showing her teeth. She has dark eyes, and dark hair dressed high, with a long curl falling over her left shoulder and reaching to her waist. A silk gauze scarf with a coloured pattern is entwined among her locks, and hangs down her back, and she wears a sash of the same material. Her dress is a light one, with a sprigged pattern of a star-like flower. This portrait is a very animated one, and both original and effective in arrangement.

The portrait of this lady's mother, Mrs. Shore Milnes, is probably a few years later in date. Her hair is grey or powdered, and upon it she wears a large lace cap, with a white scarf over it, tied under her chin. A white fichu is crossed over the breast, and the rest of her dress is hidden by a large black cloak, trimmed with black lace. It is an excellent example of Romney's power of giving a sympathetic rendering of an elderly lady, with a fine and dignified face.

The two full-lengths of Robert Shore Milnes, who was made a baronet in 1801, and his wife, are of a still later period. The portrait of the lady is mentioned elsewhere;[1] that of her husband is a characteristic example of the artist's 'full dress' representations of men of rank and fashion. He stands in a landscape, full-front, with head turned to the right, in the uniform of the Horse Guards, with a gold-braided, long-tailed, dark blue coat, white cravat, waistcoat, breeches and stockings, and an epaulette on the left shoulder. His left hand rests on his sword, and his right touches his waist. A white-and-tan setter is seated at his feet, looking up at him. The landscape background includes some hilly country and a town on the seashore in the distance, and in the foreground a tall tree-trunk

[1] See page 326.

on the right, from which a branch stretches across the top of the canvas.

A fifth picture at Fryston is the 'Portrait of a Lady' with a pretty face, represented to the waist, almost full-face, with hair powdered and falling in curls on her neck. She wears a large 'mushroom' hat covered with white muslin, and a white dress of the customary pattern, with a fichu, the lower part of the figure being covered with a cloak which has slipped from her shoulders. It is one of his slight and 'sketchy' summaries of the superficial beauties of a pretty girl.

A predominant note of what may be called his pre-Hamiltonian portraiture is its frank 'classicism,' more particularly in the pose of the sitter, and the arrangement of the draperies, based upon an intense admiration for the masterpieces of ancient Greek sculptural art, to the beauty of which his eyes had been so recently opened. It is upon such pictures as those of the Countess of Mansfield, the Countess of Derby, the daughters of Lord Malmesbury, or Hester, Countess Fortescue, and her sister, to mention only portraits of ladies, that his fame must rest most securely in the future; or such lovely work as 'Serena' or 'The Sempstress'; or, in turning to childhood, upon such groups as Mrs. Stables and her little ones, the Gower, Clavering, Cornewall, Derby, and other children, Lady Russell and her little boy, and Mrs. Carwardine and her baby.

The portrait of Lady Stormont, afterwards Countess of Mansfield, engraved by J. R. Smith in 1780, possesses merits of an exceptionally high order, and is certainly one of the finest as well as one of the most original paintings of the English school of the eighteenth century. It is as pure and chaste in design as an antique gem, from which Romney may well have adapted it, and it shows to the best advantage how much he had gained from his visit to Italy; and how free from any taint of affectation was his admiration for his models. She is seated on the ground beneath a tree, with arms folded and knees crossed in a simple, graceful attitude, with a far-away look in her eyes, as though she were in the midst of pleasant day-dreams. Her dress is based upon classical models, such as Romney always best loved to paint, and has been very carefully studied. It is of pale yellow, with a pale lavender cloak or scarf falling from her shoulders and draped over her lap. This lady was a younger sister of the lovely Mrs. Graham whose portrait, to which so interesting a story is attached, is now in the National Gallery of Scotland. The latter is a superb example of Gainsborough's light and vivacious touch, but Romney's portrait is, in

a different way, just as fine a work, more serious and reserved, more severe in its treatment, but possessing a sculpturesque beauty, and a delicacy and subtlety in its simple colour scheme which even Reynolds has rarely bettered. A critic, speaking of this portrait when it was exhibited in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1878, sums up its merits well by saying that 'Romney, as a colourist of the purest, finest order, painting with a fresco-like lucidity and brightness, as a designer in the finest classic motive, is best seen in this portrait, the "classic" of the English school.'

The earlier of the two portraits Romney painted of Henrietta, Countess of Warwick, greatly resembles the 'Lady Mansfield.' She, too, is seated with her arms folded in her lap; the hands are admirably painted. The head, with the hair dressed high above the forehead and ringlets at the back of the neck, and a thin scarf of patterned silk entwined among the tresses, is placed effectively against the dark foliage of the trees in the background; the arrangement of the draperies, and the tender earnestness of the expression, have very much in common with the former picture, and also with the 'Lady Carlisle' already described, and a number of other portraits of about this date. This mode of dressing the hair, with the entwined band, usually white with some coloured pattern, is sufficient evidence to give an approximate date to a number of his portraits; and is to be seen in the 'Lady Kenyon,' 'Lady Hanmer,' and others illustrated in this book. It was this picture which called forth Hayley's verses entitled 'Venus to Lady Warwick.' An equally beautiful example is the portrait of this lady's sister, Miss Vernon, as Hebe, belonging to the Earl of Warwick, with an antique ewer raised in her hands, and her gaze directed upwards, one of his simplest and most lovely creations.

A third portrait, much akin to the foregoing, another seated figure in a landscape, is the 'Countess of Derby,' Lady Betty Hamilton, daughter of the famous Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton, now in the possession of Sir Edward Tennant. She, too, gazes upwards, with knees crossed, and one hand touching her chin, clad in a white dress with a white brocaded skirt. This picture has just the same dignity, simplicity without affectation, and delicate charm of colour. The drawing is admirable, the modelling broad, and the carnations fresh, fine, and true.[1] Still more severe in its search for a classic

[1] According to Lady Russell this portrait was bought in Paris by the late Lord Granville, and sold by the lady's great-grandson to Sir Charles Tennant. It was engraved by John Dean in 1780.

simplicity, and even more frankly 'antique' in its arrangement and 'dressing,' is the dual portrait of the Misses Grenville, Hester, Countess Fortescue, and her sister, belonging to Mr. J. B. Fortescue, of Dropmore. The ladies are seated in front of a small sacrificial altar or tripod, from which the smoke of incense arises. One is dressed in white and the other in a dark robe, and each with bare arms. The face of the younger girl, seen in profile, has a purity of design which, once again, can be best likened to a Greek gem. She holds a small dish into which her sister, seen full face, is pouring liquid from an ewer, of the same pattern as the one carried by Miss Vernon in the 'Hebe' picture, and used by Romney again some years later in the portrait of Mrs. Jordan which recently belonged to Sir Cuthbert Quilter. The classical suggestion is carried into the background, with its distant yew trees and rounded pillar seen against the sky.

In the portrait of the 'Daughters of Lord Malmesbury' the arrangement of the two figures is much the same as the foregoing, though here the lady in the darker dress is standing, looking down at her sister, who is seen in profile, the head raised, gazing up into the sky, and chin resting on her left hand. The dresses are more studied than in the Grenville picture, though very simply arranged in large folds, and produce that sculpturesque effect which, as has been noted, is one of the chief characteristics of Romney's art at this period. The group is dignified in conception, though the figures are, perhaps, too much crowded to one side of the canvas, the large opening on the right, through which nothing is to be discerned but the top of a tree and a wide expanse of sky, producing a somewhat empty effect.

An interesting full-length of the year 1778 was shown at Messrs. Agnew's Winter Exhibition in 1906. This was the portrait of Elizabeth Capel, daughter of the fourth Earl of Essex, who had married John, third Lord Monson, in the previous year. She is shown standing to the right, with her left arm resting on a stone pedestal, and her two hands clasped upon its edge. She has brown hair, dressed high, bound with a gold ribbon, and falling on the back of the neck; and wears a pink robe, arranged in simple folds, with a blue sash with gold tassel, and white sleeves bound with gold bands above the elbow. A golden brown shawl is thrown over the pedestal. The draperies are very finely painted, and the figure is a graceful one, the whole being painted in his most 'classical' manner. The background is a very elaborate landscape, in shadow on the right, with a large circular building on the rising ground above the figure—evidently a recollection

of Rome—surrounded by tall trees. A stream, badly painted, runs down the wooded slope.

A full-length of a young girl, Miss Sage, painted in 1779, was included in the same exhibition. She is shown walking in a landscape towards the left, her face turned to the front, wearing a white satin dress, cut low, with elbow sleeves, the over-skirt bunched up at the waist as in the portrait of Maria Clavering, and a long red scarf fastened at the shoulder and waist, blown out at the back by the wind like the scarf in the same picture. She holds a bunch of roses to her breast, and the greater part of the figure is seen against a gloomy sky. She has dark eyes, and dark-brown hair falling in curls upon her neck. Tree-trunks fill the background on the right, and, on the left, a distant landscape, trees and hills, with a glimpse of seashore, such as Romney was fond of introducing into his out-door portraits.

One other full-length may be mentioned, which was at Messrs. Agnew's in 1905, the portrait of Mrs. Scott Jackson. This is another of his sculpturesque and solidly painted likenesses of a handsome lady, in which the draperies have been carefully elaborated but are a little hard. She is walking in a landscape towards the right, her head turned towards the spectator. The details of the costume and the dressing of the brown hair are much the same as in the portrait of Lady Monson. Her gown is of pale lilac with white elbow sleeves; a scarf of green with thin gold bands hangs from the back of the neck, and is brought round the waist, where it is held by both hands. The background is of dark tree-trunks, with an open forest glade on the left.

Many other beautiful portraits were painted by him between 1776 and 1782, such as those of the Countess of Clanricarde; the two lovely Ramus sisters, whom Gainsborough also painted together, in one of his happiest moments, a picture which unhappily perished by fire a few years ago; Lady Augusta Murray; Lady Willoughby de Broke; the Countess of Westmorland; Lady Craven; Lady Elizabeth Compton; Mrs. Davenport; and a number of others equally fine.

The portrait of the Countess of Clanricarde, in the possession of Sir Hugh P. Lane, a half-length, is an exceptionally beautiful example of this period. (See Plate XXXIII.) The sweetness and gentle dignity of the expression, the elegant poise of the head and action of the hand which holds the folds of the cloak, slipping from her shoulders, together at her breast, have been very admirably set upon the canvas. The subject inspired him, and, as a result, his art is seen in one of its purest

manifestations. The head stands out against a dark, cloudy background, as in the portrait of Miss Ramus, belonging to the Hon. W. F. D. Smith, M.P. (See Plate XXXIV.) The latter is of the more usual type of his smaller portraits, particularly in the simple arrangement of the dress, cut low in the front, in which the arms from the elbow downwards are not shown. The masses of her dark hair, dressed high, with a ringlet falling on the back of the neck, form an admirable foil to her delicately chiselled features. The portrait of her elder sister, Miss Benedetta Ramus, in the same collection, is more vivacious in expression, and is exceptional in that it is one of the rare instances in which Romney has depicted a sitter with a smiling face. (See Plate XXXV.) The pose, too, is more original, and very successful. The lady leans with her chin resting on her hands, which are folded over a volume of Shakespeare, set upright upon a small mahogany table. Her white dress has short sleeves of elaborate lace work, and the arms are bare from the elbow. It is a very fresh and attractive picture, and like its companion, delicately drawn, and, though a little cold in colour, well painted.

Throughout the reign of George III. many members of the Ramus family, which was of Swiss extraction, filled minor posts about the Court. The head of the family was possibly that Isaac Ramus who, in an obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the date of February 8th, 1779, is said to have been 'one of the pages of the Back Stairs to his Majesty, a native of Switzerland, and an old and faithful servant to the present royal family.' At that period Nicholas and William Ramus were pages of the Back Stairs, Thomas Ramus was a page of the Bed-Chamber, and three other members of the family, Charles, Joseph, and Louis, held offices in his Majesty's Kitchen. Charles was also secretary to the Princess-Dowager of Wales. Miss Benedetta Ramus was the elder daughter of Nicholas Ramus. She and her sister were painted by Gainsborough in the very beautiful group which realised £6615 at Christie's in 1873, and £9975 in 1889, and was unfortunately destroyed in the fire at Waddesdon when in the collection of Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. Gainsborough also painted the portrait of their brother, or uncle, William, which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1783. Benedetta married Sir John Day, Judge Advocate-General of Bengal, who was knighted in 1777. It is in connection with the bestowal of this honour that George III. is said to have perpetrated his one and only witticism, for when bidding Sir John to rise he complained that he had turned Day

into Knight! The younger Miss Ramus married Emmanuel Marie Louis, Marquis de Noailles, a well-known French diplomatist, who was Ambassador to England from 1776 to 1783. Romney painted the two portraits of the sisters shortly after his return from Italy.

The 'Lady Augusta Murray,' afterwards Duchess of Sussex, is one of his most frankly classical performances. (See Plate XXXVI.) The lady's dark hair is unpowdered, and falls in natural ringlets on the shoulders. The dress, with its simple, flowing lines, is one of Romney's own devising, with little likeness to anything his fair sitters would wear outside the studio. She is seated by a table, with her right elbow resting upon it, and supporting her portfolio, and is looking up at a small statuette on a pedestal, which she has been drawing, her sketch and crayon in either hand. The picture belongs to Mr. Charles Wertheimer. The portrait of Lady Willoughby de Broke, publicly exhibited for the first time in the Birmingham Art Gallery, in 1903, is another fine example, displaying unusual insight into character as depicted in the somewhat severe features of the sitter, no longer in her first youth, and with no great pretensions to beauty. The drawing of the left arm is a little flat and awkward, but the folds of the white dress, which have been considered with unusual care, are very finely painted. The profile portrait of Mrs. Blanshard, seen to the waist, the features standing out strongly against a dark background, is another good example of his 'Greek' type. (See Plate XXXVII.)

Romney's numerous pictures of 'Serena,' the heroine of Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper*, have been already described.[1] The one illustrated here, belonging to Major Thurlow, the only one in which she is shown full-face, which was probably painted in the autumn of 1780, when Hayley was hard at work upon the poem during Romney's yearly visit to Eartham, is the finest of all. She is represented as seated upon a low sofa, her feet raised upon a stool, reading, by the light of a candle, a book which she holds with her hands resting upon her knees. This is one of the most purely beautiful of all his works, designed in the simplest and finest taste. Piquancy is added to the sweet face by the quaint high white cap, with its broad ribbon, which conceals the ears, and almost covers the hair. The white dress is plain almost to severity, and is treated broadly with little attempt at elaborated folds. This is the kind of subject—the natural and unconscious simplicity of girlhood—which no one painted better than Romney, and in which he was completely successful.

[1] See pages 123-9.

The charm of it is abiding, and it is easy to see that both subject and sitter made an irresistible appeal to the happiest side of the painter's nature. (See Frontispiece.)

Southey,[1] writing of one of the versions of the 'Serena,' well describes its fascination when he says: 'The artist has known how to conceive and represent that perfect loveliness, which is only to be found when the features, even when most beautiful, derive their peculiar charm from the sweetness and gentleness of disposition which the countenance expresses.'

Mr. Sidney Colvin, too, gives an admirable description of Major Thurlow's picture in the paper from which extracts have been quoted on an earlier page. 'Let us turn,' he says, 'to an example of him which shows him at his very best, holding out a hand to Reynolds by the perfection of tender grace in portraiture, and to Flaxman by the perfection of monumental symmetry and simplicity. Our 'Girl Reading' (after a somewhat weak and stippled engraving by Jones) is such an example. See the simple pyramid she makes, sitting on the solitary sofa with her feet tucked up on a high stool, and the dress falling in a great plain surface over her knees on to the pretty peeping toes of her shoes; the elbows resting on the knees, the body bowed over the book, the delicate bowed features and sweet eyebrows drooped for reading; the great tall mob-cap, a tower on the top of the pyramid, the lovely little rings of hair symmetrically escaping, one in the middle, and one or two at each side; the delicate whiteness and virginity; the gravity in charm, the sweetness in reserve.'

The other versions of 'Serena Reading,' in which she is shown, in profile, seated in her chamber, just as intently engrossed in her book, with the candle burnt down to its socket, and the light of breaking dawn growing clearer every moment through the open window, are only in a degree less charming than the first one. A picture somewhat akin to these in sentiment and purity of style is the portrait of Miss Lucy Vernon, better known as 'The Sempstress.' This is a most graceful and natural figure, in a white dress and sunbonnet, seated out of doors, with head bent down to her sewing. A very interesting study for it, which is reproduced in Sir Herbert Maxwell's book, is in the possession of Captain Josceline Bagot, M.P. In this a dog is shown, lying by the side of the chair, which is omitted from the finished picture.

[1] Quoted by Allan Cunningham.

The later portrait of Cumberland's elder daughter, Elizabeth, who married Lord Edward Cavendish Bentinck, second son of the second Duke of Portland, in 1782, is one of the best known of Romney's pictures, owing to John Raphael Smith's fine mezzotint of it, published in 1779, and to various later reproductions in books relating to the artist. It was lent to the Royal Academy by Lord Hillingdon in 1891, and has been exhibited more than once since then. It is a half-length, the figure turned to the right, looking towards the spectator, and wearing a white cloak with bands of frilling and a large white hat with blue ribbons tied under the chin, and the hands hidden within a muff. It is a picture of the greatest attraction, and one of the most striking examples which can be cited as a proof of the wonderful improvement which Romney's art underwent from his studies in Italy. He painted the lady's mother and sister at the same time, all three being gifts from the artist to his friend and patron.

Another half-length portrait of the same type, and about the same period, as the portrait of Miss Cumberland, is that of 'Mrs. Davenport,' belonging to Mr. W. Bromley Davenport, which was in the Royal Academy Winter Exhibitions of 1878 and 1892. She was Charlotte, daughter of Ralph Sneyd, of Keele, Staffordshire, born in 1756, a cousin of that Honora Sneyd whom Romney never painted, although her name is usually attached to the 'Serena' pictures. Charlotte Sneyd married Davies Davenport, of Capesthorne, M.P. for Cheshire, in 1777. He has painted her with her face turned over her left shoulder towards the spectator, in a pink fur-trimmed dress, and a broad-brimmed white straw hat with a brown bow. It has a little of the hardness and dryness of which traces still lingered in his work for the first few years after his return from abroad, but the lovely face with its very winning expression, is one of his most sympathetic transcripts of fresh English girlhood. It was well mezzotinted by John Jones in 1784.

A portrait very similar in arrangement and style, and of about the same date as those of the Countess of Carlisle and the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, is that of Lady Emilia Kerr, daughter of William, fourth Marquis of Lothian, who married Lieut.-General Sir John McCleod in 1783. It is an oval, showing her seated to the left, with her head, gracefully poised on a long slender neck, turned towards the spectator. Her pink dress, with gold bands and trimming, open at the breast, is arranged in classic folds, and her hair,

entwined with pearls and a pink riband, is dressed high above the forehead, with heavy ringlets at the back of the neck. The head stands out against a dark sky, while low down on the left is shown Romney's favourite glimpse of sea coast. According to a writer in the *Times*[1] it was painted in 1779, the painter receiving eighteen guineas for it; Messrs. Colnaghi and Company gave £2730 for it at Christie's on May 7th, 1905. This portrait was given to Lady Caroline Damer by the sitter in exchange for Lady Caroline's, also by Romney.

A second portrait of about the same date as the two last examples is that of Miss Frances Harford, in the Frick Collection in America. Though not so fine a work as the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, it is painted in the same style, and closely follows it in arrangement of pose, hair, and draperies.

Another good portrait belonging to this time is the one of the Hon. Lucy Stanley, exhibited at Messrs. Sulley's Gallery in 1906. She is represented at almost full length, seated on a bank under some trees, in a white dress of simple folds, crossed over at the breast, and fastened with a jewel at each shoulder. A long purple scarf falls from the back of the neck to the ground, with the ends thrown over the knees. Her dark hair, with ringlets, is dressed high, and ornamented with a small diamond brooch, and a green and gold gauze scarf of the pattern already described. The draperies are arranged, as usual, in plain folds of his ordinary 'classic' pattern, and the type of the face, and its colouring, recall such a portrait as the oval of 'Lady Craven' in the National Gallery.

One other example of this type, a bust portrait, an oval in a square, probably painted between 1778 and 1780, or perhaps a few years later, representing 'Miss Eleanor Carter,' was in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1906, No. 58, lent by the Earl of Yarborough. The sitter is turned to the left, with the face three-quarters to the front, dressed in a white bodice, cut low, with blue silk elbow sleeves trimmed with white fur looped with pearls. Her hair, partly in powder, is dressed high over the forehead, with a long curl falling at the back of the neck. It is the portrait of a pretty and charming girl, with a sweet and serious expression in her brown eyes.

The year before he met Lady Hamilton, he painted the two handsome daughters of Sir Robert Gunning, both half-lengths. They are

[1] May 8th, 1905.

the property of Sir Frederick Gunning, Bart, and were included in Messrs. Agnew and Sons' Exhibition in 1905, and are reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book. The elder daughter, Charlotte Margaret, who married Colonel the Honourable Stephen Digby in 1790, has chestnut hair slightly in powder, with a pale grey veil over it, and black silk dress with red waist belt. The background is a stormy, cloudy sky. The younger girl, Barbara Evelyn Isabella, who married General Alexander Ross in 1795, also has chestnut hair, unpowdered and hanging in ringlets on her neck. Her dress is dark brown, cut square at the neck, with a white frill. Her right elbow rests on a parapet, with the hand under her chin, and her left arm hangs down, the hand not shown. In both portraits the details of the dress have been very rapidly painted. A second portrait of Mrs. Ross, in a white dress and blue fur-trimmed cloak, was lent to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1888, by Major Ross, M.P.

A portrait of Mrs. Whatman, eldest daughter of Jacob Bosanquet, painted in 1782, was exhibited at Messrs. Agnews' in 1906. It is a bust portrait, an oval in a square, of much the same type and quality as the Gower portraits. She is turned to the left, looking at the spectator, with a dress of pale lilac satin, and a gauze scarf with gold fringe falling from the shoulder. Her powdered hair is dressed high, entwined with ribbon, and curls at the back of the neck. The eyes are dark, and there is a sweet, pensive expression in the beautiful face, the head standing out finely against a background of dark sky. Mention must also be made of the very animated and attractive portrait of Lady Holte, of Aston Hall, a head and shoulders, in the Birmingham Art Gallery, for which the lady sat in 1783. Romney painted about the same time a fine group of her daughter, Mrs. Bracebridge, and child, which still remains in Atherstone Hall.

During these years between his return from Italy and his meeting with Emma Hart, he also produced many of his finest renderings of children, and a number of those beautiful groups of mother and child, or children, which, in their fine and intimately sympathetic insight into the depth and tenderness of maternal love, place them on a level with anything Sir Joshua accomplished in this field. Such pictures as those of the Duchess of Gordon and her son, the Marquis of Huntly, the entrancing Mrs. Canning and her happy daughter, Mrs. Morris and her son, Mrs. Charles Hawkins, and Mrs. Stables, with their children, and Mrs. Carwardine and her baby boy, make an

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instant and powerful appeal to every one, through the truth and beauty of their vision, and the painter's keen appreciation of the closeness of the tie binding mother and child together; while his children in couples or alone, such as the Clavering, Cornewall, Wallace and Boone children, are of quite as high a quality, if not higher, than his later work of this nature. The 'George and Catherine Cornewall' group, belonging to the Rev. Sir George Cornewall, Bart., is a smaller variant of the great Stafford family group. The little boy with hair curling on his shoulders, and quaint long coat, is playing a tambourine, to which his sister, a year or two older, is dancing, with the skirt of her dress gathered up and tucked under the scarf round her waist, one end of which she holds with both hands in a circle over her head, where it is blown out by the breeze, and by the movement of the somewhat sedate measure she is treading. Her dark hair is bound round with a chaplet of flowers and her white dress, with elbow sleeves, is open at the neck. They are a sweet and winsome pair, a little dignified and stately in the manner in which they are taking their pleasures. The picture is very 'decorative' in effect, but, at the same time, is a truthful and convincing study of childhood. (See Plate XXXVIII.)

The group of Thomas John Clavering and his sister, Catherine Mary, which was lent by the Rev. J. W. Napier-Clavering to the exhibition in the Birmingham Art Gallery in 1900, is treated in much the same decorative manner. In this picture the girl's pink sash, or long scarf, streams behind her in the wind in a graceful curve. The upper skirt of her white dress is looped up much in the same way as that of Catherine Cornewall, and she is looking down with delight at a puppy she holds to her breast. Her brother, who gazes full face towards the spectator, has one arm round his sister's waist, while with the other he holds aloft a leash to which two spaniels are attached, one of which is fawning against him. He wears a pink close-fitting suit with white stockings, and his thick curling hair falls over a white collar. The two figures are seen against a stormy sky, and the colour scheme is a light one. It is one of Romney's most graceful, though rather artificial, examples of child-portraiture, and was engraved in mezzotint by J. R. Smith in 1779. (See Plate XXXIX.)

Another good group is that of Maria and Catherine Thurlow, the natural daughters of the famous Lord Chancellor, now in America, in the Byers Collection. These two demure little maidens, with their white frocks and quaint head-dresses bedecked with flowers and

ribands, standing by the side of a spinet, attract at once by the naturalness of their pose, and the innocence of their expression. The colour is quiet and harmonious, while the technical quality of the work is sound and assured.

Two other very sweet and tender portraits of children are those of Master and Miss Wallace, belonging to Mr. J. Hope Wallace, half-lengths, simply and broadly painted, and displaying the closest sympathy and refinement. (See Plates XL. and XLI.) Another portrait of this class is the full-length of Lord Henry Petty, in the Marquis of Lansdowne's collection, which was exhibited in the Birmingham Art Gallery in 1900. This little lad in his quaint blue-tailed coat and amber-coloured trousers and fair hair falling on his white collar, embodies all the innocent, unconscious grace and spirituality of childhood, and looks up from the book he has been studying with gentle serenity and an air of high breeding. This portrait formed originally part of a larger canvas in which the figure of Lady Lansdowne was to have been included.

One of the 'romances' of the auction room occured at Messrs. Christie's towards the end of 1904, when, at a sale of miscellaneous properties, three pictures were put up from the collection of Mr. John Tomlinson, of Whitehaven, who had recently died at the age of ninety. For many years he had lived in a miner's cottage at a rental of a few shillings a week, and had a passion for collecting pictures, though it is said that he never gave more than a shilling or two for any of his purchases. Under these conditions it is not surprising that his collection consisted for the most part part of rubbish, which was not improved by his habit of cleaning his purchases himself. Happily he had left untouched the three works in question, portraits of an officer and his wife and their two children, though they were so covered with an accumulation of dirt, as to be almost obliterated. The full-length of the two children turned out to be a genuine example of Romney, an unframed canvas of 60 ins. by 47 ins., which apparently had been rolled up for many years, and at a later period provided with a home-made stretcher by its late owner. Anecdotes about the picture appeared in various newspapers, so that on the day of the sale the room was crowded, and after some spirited bidding it fell to Messrs. Agnew and Sons for the sum of 6500 guineas. After careful cleaning it emerged from its obscurity as a very interesting example of Romney's child-portraiture, and was included in the firm's Winter Exhibition in 1905, under the title of the 'Vernon

Children.' It represents two little children walking in a landscape. The boy, who is the younger of the two, is wearing a red coat with a green collar, red breeches, white ruff, and a high dark green hat with a feather, and carries a toy gun over his shoulder. His sister, who is a few years older, is in a white dress, blue sash, and red shoes, with brown curls falling on her neck. She is holding a doll in both arms, and a black-and-tan terrier jumps up against her. The landscape background shows a stretch of open country with distant trees on the left, and on the right a group of big tree trunks with something which looks like a large waterfall behind the girl, but is more probably part of the sky which has suffered in the past when uncared for in the miner's cottage. A writer in the *Times* (December 5, 1904) gives the probable date of the picture as 1777; and parts of it, such as the painting of the white dress, which is simple, solid and good, and very like the handling of little John Fane's white frock in Lord Burton's picture, point to a period shortly after Romney's return from Italy.

In the same exhibition there was exhibited a very similar group by Sir Joshua Reynolds, that of the Boringdon children, portraits of the Hon. John Parker and his sister, Theresa. In this, too, the boy wears a red coat and the girl a white dress, and a round close-fitting cap with white and pink frills. They are seated side by side in a landscape, which forms a background of rich golden brown. In comparing the two one is forced to acknowledge that the advantage is with the Reynolds, which is more harmonious and mellow in colour, and painted with greater animation and a closer observation, which give it a more lifelike and 'realistic' effect.

One of Romney's most lovely groups of mother and child is undoubtedly the 'Jane, Duchess of Gordon and her son, the Marquis of Huntly,' belonging to Mr. Charles Wertheimer. (See Plate XLII.)

The lady, seated with her head resting on one hand, in a very graceful attitude, while with the other she holds in her lap a sketch her boy has just made, is looking in front of her with that half-wistful expression which Romney often gave to his sitters in such groups—it is to be seen, for instance, in the 'Mother and Child' of the National Gallery, the 'Mrs. Carwardine and Child,' and Lord Lathom's 'Mrs. George Wilson and Daughter.' The boy, who stands behind his mother, leaning over her in a tender, affectionate manner, with one arm thrown over the back of her chair, and the other holding his sketching materials, is looking down at his handiwork. It is a pure and delightful idyll of maternal and filial love, and is one

of the sweetest and freshest masterpieces of the painter's best period.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, to whom this picture belonged, gives in his *Life* of Romney, an interesting account of how he came to part with it. 'In 1882,' he writes, 'I was asked to send to the Winter Exhibition in Burlington House a portrait of my great grand-aunt, Jane, Duchess of Gordon, with her son, the Marquis of Huntly. Now it had happened that this picture had always been attributed to Reynolds, and it was insured in consequence for 5000 guineas. But the hanging committee recognised the work of Romney, and it was placed in their catalogue under the name of that painter. No sooner was the picture hung than dealers opened negotiations for purchase. I had no wish to part with it, but at last, being hard pressed by one of the most eminent of that fraternity, I replied: "Well, Mr. ——, if you were to offer me five thousand guineas, I might think about it."

'"Five thousand guineas!" exclaimed the expert, with a compassionate smile at my ignorance; "five thousand guineas! Why, my dear sir, there never was a picture of Romney's worth more than twelve hundred and fifty."

'"Very well, Mr. ——," quoth I; "then I am quite content to keep my picture."

'Seven years later, in 1889, the same picture was sent to the Guelph Exhibition at the New Gallery. These years had been very disastrous to British agriculture, and when the dealers re-opened negotiations they found me in a far more pliable mood, and in the end I parted with my picture for 5500 guineas, but not to the same gentleman who had been so eager about it in 1882. He now came and reproached me for not letting him have the refusal of it this time.

'"But Mr. ——," said I, "you told me that its utmost value was twelve hundred and fifty guineas."

'"That was its full value at the time," he replied; "but the public taste has matured very fast since then."'

Romney painted another very beautiful portrait of the Duchess of Gordon at a later date, a seated figure in white with her hair dressed in loose curls, partly in powder, and a fox terrier nestling on her lap in a very natural way. It belongs to Sir Edmund Antrobus, of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, and is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland-Gower's book,[1] and in the *Burlington Magazine* for

[1] Where it is wrongly called Lady Antrobus.

February 1904. It was at one time in the collection of Mr. 'Fish' Crawford, and came into the possession of the Antrobus family in 1822. This fascinating lady, one of the social leaders of her day, the friend of Pitt, and the rival of the Duchess of Devonshire, was largely instrumental in raising the regiment of the Gordon Highlanders; and there is another good portrait of her painted by Lawrence, and shown by Messrs. Agnew at their Winter Exhibition of 1905, in which she is dressed in a military overcoat and black busby.

In any account of Romney's paintings of this class Lord Hillingdon's lovely canvas, 'Mrs. Anne Carwardine and Child,' must be given one of the first places. Romney was always at his best when painting those bound to him by close ties of friendship, and the members of the Carwardine family were very dear to him. He painted more than one portrait of his friends at Colne Priory. The one now in question, one of the first works he accomplished after his return from Italy, shows in a very marked degree how beneficial to his art had been the course of hard study among the old masters which he had just undergone.

It is one of the most Italianate of his works, inspired by certain of the lovely models he had studied so closely, but in no way a slavish copy. It is certainly one of his finest and most complete expressions of the tenderness of a mother's love and of the confiding innocence of childhood. The action of Mrs. Carwardine, as she clasps her little one to her breast, pressing her lips upon its hair, simple in composition as it is, and restrained in its expression of deep feeling, is one of the happiest with which his brush was ever inspired. It is conceived in the pure Italian taste, and painted in a broad but careful style, with good massing of light and shade, and the flesh tints distinguished by both delicacy and solidity.

Imbued with the like feeling, but much more joyous in its manifestation, is the very lovely portrait of Mrs. Stratford Canning and her little daughter, which was exhibited at Messrs. Agnew's in 1901. The artist has depicted them in a landscape, the lady in a dark brown dress with closely fitting sleeves, and hair dressed high with a white scarf entwined in it, seated with arms clasped round the waist of the child in her lap, who flings her small arms round her mother's neck. Both look out at the spectator with happy faces, the little girl smiling merrily. (See Plate XLIII.) A second very original composition, and a most natural and happy one, is that of Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Russell and

her child, of which an excellent preliminary study in oils is reproduced by Lord Ronald Sutherland-Gower in his book. The mother is holding her small son on the top of a Chippendale card-table placed against the wall, to allow him to look at himself in a circular mirror on the wall above, against the glass of which he presses both hands, with his back to the spectator his face only seen in reflection. Mrs. Russell, who holds him by his sash, with her other hand resting on a book on the table, is looking round as though her attention were attracted by the entrance of some one into the room. It would be difficult to exaggerate the charm and freshness of this very delightful group. (See Plate XII.)

A third beautiful and still better known group is that of Mrs. Stables and her daughters. They are represented in a landscape, the mother seated at the base of a pillar, with one knee raised and resting against a low stone table or parapet, which partly conceals the elder girl, who holds a basket of fruit. The younger child stands on the top of the stone, with little arms encircling her mother's neck, in the prettiest attitude, and in her turn held closely and lovingly. Mrs. Stables' dress is painted in Romney's most careful and 'classical' taste, and is an excellent example of his mastery in the arrangement of drapery, while the two heads stand out with great effect against a background of dark foliage. Both this picture and the 'Mrs. Carwardine' were well mezzotinted by J. R. Smith in 1781. Another picture of mother and child, in which the attitude is very similar to the Stables group, is that of Mrs. Morton Pitt and her daughter Sophia, belonging to Mr. Charles Wertheimer, though in this the little girl stands by her mother's side, leaning across her lap, with her arms round her waist.

XXIV

ALL these pictures were painted before Romney met the lady to whose influence popular opinion has ascribed so much of his success. He had painted, too, a number of notable portraits of men, such as the full-lengths of Lord Gower and Lord Chancellor Thurlow at Stafford House, the Richard Cumberland in the National Portrait Gallery, William Hayley, Sir Hyde Parker, Sir James Harris, the Duke of Richmond, Burke, and many others.

From 1782 until the spring of 1786, he worked almost constantly under the spell of the loveliness and magnetic personality of Lady Hamilton. In her he found both his ideal of beauty and an incomparable model. She was flattered by Romney's enthusiastic admiration, and threw herself willingly enough into his projects for a series of pictures of which she was to be the subject. Her happy gift of graceful attitudinising, her sense of dramatic movement and the mobility of her exquisite features, as described in an earlier chapter, combined to make her a model of singular inspiration to the painter. She responded to the least suggestion with wonderful intuition, never growing tired of occupying the sitter's chair; and always ready, and even glad, to represent a new character or to pose in a fresh attitude.

Under this stimulus, invaluable to such a nature as Romney's, his imagination grew still more active. His colour became more tender and refined, and his rendering of line even more graceful, more sensuous in its beauty, and his treatment less purely decorative and sculpturesque. In the very first picture of her he painted, the delightfully girlish and vivacious one in which she is shown with a dog under her arm, usually called 'Lady Hamilton as Nature,' one of the finest things he had so far accomplished, he has already arrived at a greater vitality and realism; as in that other, of even greater beauty of expression, in which she is represented in flowing robes which flutter in the breeze, dragging a goat by the horns, while a dog bounds along in front of her, the picture known as 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante,' though wood-nymph would be a better name for her.

In the latter, which was until recently in the collection of Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne, an admirable effect of graceful movement is produced more successfully than Romney often obtained. The picture has suffered somewhat in the course of time, but still retains its beauty of colour almost undimmed, and it is perhaps the most sympathetic and natural of all his many studies of the lady. It is easy to see from it how great must have been her fascination to one who had a passion for natural beauty. (See Plate IX.)

A canvas akin to this, though more abandoned in movement and less refined in expression, is the three-quarters length of her as a 'Bacchante dancing on a Heath,' which was purchased by Miss Romney together with the 'Mrs. Billington' for 725 guineas in 1875, and realised 600 guineas at her sale in 1894. A second version of this subject was included in Messrs. Agnew's 1904 Exhibition, No. 20, under the title of 'Lady Hamilton as Mirth.' She wears a red dress, with a belt of brown twisted ribbon, and holds a thin blue scarf which is blown out by the wind into a curve over her head. Her chestnut hair, bound with a blue fillet, is in wild disorder, while her arms and bosom are bare. The position is graceful, but rather affected. There is a fine background of grey sky, with a glimpse of bare hillside low down on the horizon.

He painted her under various classical guises, such as Cassandra, Alope, or Circe; and in a number of fanciful characters, one of the most perfect of all being the full-length of her at the spinning wheel.[1]

Some of these have been described on an earlier page, including the 'Circe,' to which Romney never put the finishing touches. This fine full-length, in which the attitude, with left arm uplifted, is effective, remains, in spite of William Long's amateur additions, one of the most important and elaborate pictures which the painter attempted of his divinity. In this, as in more than one of Romney's full-lengths, the height of the body is a little exaggerated, giving an effect of unusual tallness. One of the most beautiful of the smaller of her portraits is the so-called 'Lady Hamilton as Ariadne,'[2] in which she is represented as sitting, almost in profile, in a cave by the sea. She is looking downward, lost in thoughts, which are serious, if not unhappy ones. A little boat on the horizon suggests the cause of her sadness. The expression of the face is very sweet and tender, and the painting of the dress, with its few large folds and broad flat spaces, is excellent. (See Plate XX.)

[1] See page 116.

[2] See page 182.

One of the most elaborate of these pictures is 'The Lady Hamilton as a Nun,' in Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne's collection, in which she is kneeling before the figure of a saint in a sculptured niche in some cloister, with hands crossed on her bare bosom, and eyes cast upwards in adoration. A thin scarf hangs loosely over her tumbled hair, which frames the fine oval of her face. A basket of roses is on the ground at her side, and other flowers are in vases at the base of the saintly image. The costume is more that of a Vestal Virgin than of a nun.[1] The head in this picture has much in common, both as regards pose and expression, with the head in 'Lady Hamilton as St. Cecilia,' in which also, the face is turned upwards, with the same rapt expression. In this latter picture, which was lent by Lord Masham to the Guildhall Exhibition in 1899, her hair falls in long ringlets over each shoulder down to the waist. She is seated by the side of an organ, against which a large mandolin rests, with an open book on her lap, upon which her hands rest in the attitude of prayer. Rays of light fall from above upon the upturned face. Two other canvases based upon the 'St. Cecilia' have been described in an earlier chapter.[2] The more important one, belonging to Lord Iveagh, is very carefully and elaborately painted, and the face, as is natural with such a model, is a beautiful one, but as a study of expression it is less successful, and leaves the spectator cold and unconvinced. The second study is an almost exact counterpart, but more simply and freely handled, and displays a sincerer feeling.

The story of the painting of the 'Lady Hamilton as Sensibility' has been already told.[3] The head in this picture is one of his most expressive renderings of his 'divine lady,' and upon the small canvas on which it was originally painted it made a perfect picture of its kind. It is doubtful whether Hayley, who suggested the title, and persuaded Romney to enlarge the canvas, so as to introduce the whole figure and the sensitive plant, improved matters by his flatteries and interference. The figure is not one of the painter's best efforts. When this picture was exhibited in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1894, the art critic of the *Athenæum* drew attention to the bad drawing of the right arm as being quite unworthy of so good a draughtsman, and considered that it failed, too, in its affected attitude and the assumption of sentimentality in the expression, and that the red dress and blue shawl were less harmonious than usual with Romney, who seldom made a mistake

[1] See Plate XLIV. [2] See page 116. [3] See page 115.

in such a matter, and was an excellent colourist within the range of a very limited palette. He admitted, however, that the picture looked dirty at the time. Such faults as it possesses were, no doubt, largely due to the alterations carried out at Hayley's suggestion, who wished it to appear as though inspired by his own verses.

There is no doubt, however, that when Romney was content to paint Emma in more modern and more simple guise, as in the splendid picture of the 'Spinstress,' now in Lord Iveagh's collection, instead of in masquerade as some classical nymph or heroine of romance, he was more successful. The former works have a naturalness which cannot fail to charm, while the latter, more or less perfect in ideal beauty, seem less sincere, and while pleasing the eye, leave the heart untouched. In 'The Spinstress' the attitude, which Robinson[1] said was adopted from a sketch taken from life of a cobbler's wife at work in her husband's stall, is a natural and very happy one. She is seated in a chair in the open air, by a cottage doorway, the body in profile, and the head turned over the right shoulder to face the spectator. Her hands are occupied with her wheel and flax. The plain dress shows to advantage the curves of her beautiful figure, and her hair is covered with the long white scarf in which he painted her a number of times. In this instance it is crossed under her chin, with the long ends falling down her back as far as the ground. A hen and some chickens are busy near her feet. This picture, which was engraved in stipple by Thomas Cheesman in 1789, is one of the most lovely renderings of Emma which his sympathetic brush ever set upon canvas, and it is small wonder that Charles Greville was loth to part with it to Mr. Christian Curwen. There is a slight but admirable preliminary study for it in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, which is reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book. Mr. Walter Sichel gives, in his recently published volume, *Emma, Lady Hamilton*, a sepia study by Romney of exceptional interest, showing the interior of his studio, with a group of four figures. The one on the left, just entering the room, with a smile on his face, is Greville. Two other men are seated at a table in the centre, and on the extreme right Emma is shown at the spinning-wheel. Her attitude, which is a very graceful one, differs slightly from the pose in the finished picture. The body is turned more round to the front, with the head leaning towards the right shoulder, as she speaks or listens to the man who is seated nearest to her. Possibly this last may be Hayley, though little likeness to him can be discerned,

[1] See page 267.

but he holds a book in his hands, and his habit of reading aloud, more particularly from his own poems, when Romney was working, was an inveterate one.

Dozens of studies of the Enchantress in various attitudes, and many beginnings of pictures, which his easily excited imagination had conceived under her immediate spell, remained unfinished, and encumbered his studio until his death. His temperament was such that his artistic impulses were just as quickly chilled by absence or fancied neglect, as fired by the presence of his 'divine lady.' Some of these, no doubt, were done after she had left England in 1786, and were studies from memory, pale recollections of a beauty which had bewitched him so long as he was privileged to gaze upon it, a loveliness which still intruded itself years afterwards, when he was planning those innumerable pictures of imagination and fancy upon which he never once ceased to hope that he might build for himself a lasting reputation.

It would serve no useful purpose to attempt any complete list of these almost innumerable studies, as this has been done so admirably in Messrs. Ward and Roberts' book; but several of the best of them are reproduced in this volume. The one in the National Portrait Gallery, purchased by the Trustees in 1870, in which she is shown with elbows leaning on a table, and hands resting under her chin, is well known. The body is in profile, and the head turned over the left shoulder, so that the face is towards the spectator. The long white scarf is draped turban wise over the forehead, with the ends hanging down her back. It is an unfinished study, but the face is one of his most refined and expressive likenesses of her. Its chief defect is in the peculiar pose of the head, whereby no part of the neck is seen, so that the former seems to be detached from the body and only to be held in place by the hands. It was a favourite attitude of hers when Romney was painting her, and is to be seen in an even more pronounced degree in the hasty but vivid 'Study of Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante' in the National Gallery, No. 312, in which the head, with its happy, smiling face, is thrown back until the cheek rests upon the shoulder, completely hiding the neck.

A second unfinished study of her in the National Gallery, No. 1668, called 'Sketch Portrait of Lady Hamilton,' a small circular canvas, was bequeathed in 1898 by General J. Julius Johnstone. It is a study for the head of the 'Cassandra' picture, another version of which was in the possession of Hayley, and was engraved in stipple by Caroline Watson for his book, the picture itself being now in the collection of

Mr. E. L. Raphael. The National Gallery study is wrongly described in the catalogue: 'The head, nearly full-face, is shown turned slightly back over the right shoulder. The lips are parted, the eyes raised, and the rich brown hair is spread in disorder against a white pillow behind.' The latter statement is incorrect. There is no white pillow behind her head; it is merely the unpainted left hand with which, in the finished picture, she is crowning herself with a wreath, while the right arm, uplifted, holds an axe. The artist has left the canvas bare, but the shape of the fingers can be easily distinguished.

Another version of the picture in the National Portrait Gallery, in which attitude and dress are much the same, was lent by Mrs. Harvey, of Ickwell Bury, to the Guelph Exhibition, 1891, No. 241. A note in the catalogue stated that it was 'the first portrait done by Romney of Lady Hamilton. He was on a visit to Ickwell Bury to paint the then Mrs. Harvey's portrait, saw the beautiful girl, who was a servant in the house, and was so struck with her, that he at once asked for permission to make this likeness.' This statement, which has been repeated more than once, for the picture has been exhibited several times, is a pure legend, with no foundation in fact. Emma Hart was never in service at Ickwell Bury, and Romney saw her for the first time when Greville brought her to his studio in 1782; nor did he visit Ickwell Bury to paint Mrs. Harvey's portrait, for all his work was done in his own studio, except in the case of a few intimate friends, and then only at Eartham, and, possibly, Colne Priory.

Three other rapid studies of her are illustrated here, all of them fine examples of the freedom and power of Romney's brush when the true inspiration was upon him. It would be difficult to say which of them is the more beautiful. Mr. F. C. Arkwright's picture, is, perhaps, the best likeness, and is a singularly fresh and animated impression of the lady's lovely features. The waves of dark hair, dashed in with the greatest haste and freedom, serve as an admirable foil to the roses of her cheeks. Mr. G. Harland Peck's 'Euphrosyne' is one of his boldest and most daring improvisations. It is the most animated of all Romney's studies of her, the most frankly sensuous. Painted probably in less than a couple of hours, it is alive with laughter and the joy of living, a brilliant piece of hasty manipulation, which no one but an artist captivated by his subject could produce. The sketch with the misleading title 'Lady Hamilton as a Child,' belonging to Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne, is another brilliant study of the face that haunted him. In this the keynote is innocence, and the upturned face

with its parted lips, and expression of adoration, is in striking contrast to the frank joyousness of Mr. Harland Peck's picture. The lady's extreme mobility of features, combined with the painter's power, in the case, at least, of this one sitter, of seizing the most fleeting expressions of the human countenance, permitted an infinite variety of effect within the limits of a single theme.

This stimulus, however, did not exhaust itself in pictures of the fair Emma alone. His studio continued to be the rendezvous of many of the leading members of the fashionable world, who were eager to be painted by so popular an artist, who made the utmost of his sitters' charms. Between 1782 and 1786 he painted such fine portraits as those of Lady Beauchamp-Proctor, Lady Arabella Ward, in pale blue velvet, Miss Sarah Rodbard, with her skye-terrier perched on the top of a classical pillar, Lady Rouse-Boughton, and Lady Milner.

The famous picture, now known as 'Beauty and the Arts,' in Mr. C. J. Wertheimer's collection, containing portraits of the Ladies Caroline and Elizabeth Spencer, daughters of the fourth Duke of Marlborough, was begun in 1786; and other sitters of this period, to mention only a few, whose portraits can be placed among his finest achievements, were Miss Sophia Lawrence, and her brother William, Lady Mary Sullivan, the Earl of Westmorland, Earl Grey, Miss Anne Kershaw, Mrs. Robinson ('Perdita') (see Plate XLIX.), Mrs. Raikes (see Plate XIII.), Mrs. Jordan as the 'Country Girl,' and Elizabeth, Lady Forbes (see Plate XLVIII.).

'Beauty and the Arts' is one of Romney's most ambitious portrait groups, and in it his delight in the physical loveliness of his sitters has found very complete expression. There is some little awkwardness in the pose of Lady Caroline Spencer, on the right, dressed in white, who is playing the harp, but in all other respects the picture must be regarded as one of his most masterly efforts.[1] The portraits of Miss Lawrence and her brother, which were lent to the Birmingham Exhibition in 1903 by Mr. Lockett Agnew, are two three-quarter lengths of superb quality. The one of William Lawrence was painted in 1785, when he was twenty-one, in which year he died. He is dressed in a fawn-coloured coat and a waistcoat of pink and black stripes, and the gold-embroidered gown of an Oxford Commoner. It is a work of rare attractiveness, having unusual beauty of tone and great mellowness of colour, so that at the first glance it might almost be taken for a fine

[1] Lady Caroline married, in 1792, Henry, second Viscount Clifden. Her younger sister, Elizabeth, who married John Spencer, is in red, with a blue sash. (See Plate XIV.)

example from the brush of Reynolds. As a portrait of a handsome youth, of manly, unaffected bearing, it has a winning charm which it is impossible to resist. Exceptional care has been bestowed upon the technique, which, nevertheless, loses nothing of the broadness and freedom which marked Romney's handling at its best. Much the same qualities characterise the companion-picture of the sister, which was painted a year later. It has dignity and repose, and the treatment of the black dress, which, no doubt, she was wearing in memory of her brother, is one of his happiest effects both in design and in the skilful management of a single tint. Both these portraits bear signs in every touch that the painting of them was a labour of love to the artist.

In the portrait of Lady Mary Sullivan, now in Canada, in the Ross Collection, Romney is seen at his best in the beautiful painting of the white draperies. The pose of the lady is almost identical with that of Miss Sophia Lawrence, as are also the poise of the head, the arrangement of the hair and dress, and the position of the long, elegant hands.

Another good half-length portrait of the year 1784,[1] is that of Mrs. Methuen, elder daughter of Sir Thomas Gooch, of Benacre, Suffolk, who married Paul Cobb Methuen in 1776. She is wearing a plain white dress with close-fitting sleeves, cut low, and folded across the breast, with a pink sash and a large black broad-brimmed hat tilted on the left side of a mass of curled hair, in half-powder, with ringlets falling on her shoulder. She rests upon her left arm, and her hands are joined in front of her. £3570 was given for this picture at Christie's on May 7th, 1905. She was also painted by Gainsborough and Reynolds, the former portrait being now in America, in the collection of Mr. P. A. B. Widener, of Philadelphia. Her husband's portrait by Romney was sold at the same time, but only realised £420. Both were from the collection of the Rev. T. P. Methuen, of Bath.

Another example of his art at its finest is the portrait of the lovely, ill-fated 'Perdita' Robinson, which now hangs in the Wallace Collection by the side of the wonderful full-length of the same lady by Gainsborough, and Sir Joshua's less idealised version of her. Romney has represented her in walking dress, with a large white cap tied under her chin, and her hands buried in a white fur muff. A black lace-edged shawl almost covers her dress of brown silk, which is filled in with thin muslin at the neck and bosom, only half veiling the flesh beneath it. The hair is lightly powdered and not too elaborately

[1] According to the *Times*, May 8th, 1905.

curled, and the complexion is fresh and charming. This picture was bought in for 19 guineas by William Saunders, Romney's frame-maker, at the Romney sale of 1807; an unfinished 'Portrait of Perdita (Mrs. Robinson)' being sold at the same time for sixteen shillings.

All Romney's old enthusiasm returned when his enchantress came back again to England for a few months in 1791. Though she was now received by society with open arms and had not the time to sit to him as frequently as of old, yet she gave him more than one opportunity of painting her. It may, perhaps, have been to some extent owing to this renewed inspiration, together with the loveliness of his subject, that he produced this year the very finest full-length portrait he ever accomplished—that of Mrs. Lee Acton, second wife of Nathaniel Lee Acton. This is one of the most perfect pictures of fair English womanhood that the art of the eighteenth century has given us, and is filled with that nameless sweetness, grace, and elegance which characterise Romney's art at its best; a picture which stamps the painter as a master, who, on occasion, could rise to heights as great as those attained by Reynolds or Gainsborough.

This portrait, which belongs to Lord de Saumarez, was lent to the Romney Exhibition in 1900, and to the Royal Academy in 1879 and again in 1907. The lady, who was Penelope, daughter of the Rev. Sir Richard N. Rycroft, Bart., married Nathaniel Lee Acton in 1791, the portrait being painted in the same year. She is represented standing in a landscape, dressed entirely in white, the only touch of colour being a pale purple-grey silk sash, and wearing a large hat with great bunches of white ribbon, tied under her chin in very becoming fashion. Her hair is elaborately curled and partly in powder, and her head turned over her left shoulder with a wistful, far-away look in the eyes, and her beautiful hands lightly clasped together. The dress with its plain, close-fitting sleeves, is arranged in straight and severe folds. The background is an ambitious one, but is the least successful part of the picture, though, with the russet-brown tones of its rather formless foliage, and the blue-grey of the distant storm-clouds, it forms an effective setting to the figure. It was engraved by Mr. H. Scott Bridgwater in 1901. (See Plate LI.)

It is not, however, in any way intended to suggest that Romney's art needed the presence of a model like Lady Hamilton before it could reach its complete expression. From 1786 to 1791 he painted almost as many fine things as between 1782 and 1786. It is not necessary to give a list of them here; more than one of them will be found among

the accompanying reproductions; but mention may be made of Lady Warwick and her two children, Mrs. Mark Currie, and the expressive and noble full-length of Lady Newdigate. His brush, too, had gained still greater freedom as his art grew more assured, as may be seen in the bolder, more brilliant, and hastier handling of such well-known studies of woman's loveliness as Lady Sligo, Mrs. Clayton Glyn, Mrs. Tickell, Mrs. Crouch, and Lady Lemon. (See Plate LII.)

A very beautiful portrait, a small canvas 29 in. by 24 in., was sold at Messrs. Christie's on May 7th, 1905. It was the most important example in the collection of works by old masters formed by the late Mr. Edward Cheney, of Badger Hall, Shropshire, and inherited by Mr. Francis Capel-Cure. The catalogue, in which it was illustrated, described it as a portrait of 'H.R.H. Princess Amelia, daughter of George III.,' given by H.R.H. Prince Frederick, Duke of York, to his aide-de-camp, General Cheney. It was pointed out in *The Times*,[1] however, that it could not possibly be a portrait of the Princess, who was born in 1783, and would be still a girl at the time when Romney ceased from painting portraits. He did not paint any member of George III.'s family, and the only royal personages who sat to him were Prince William Frederick of Gloucester, now at Trinity College, Cambridge, and his daughter Sophia Matilda, which was in the Duke of Cambridge's sale in 1904. The portrait fell to Messrs. Colnaghi and Co. for £2940. The lady, whoever she may have been, is handsome, and is shown to the waist, full face, in a white dress with a black cloak thrown loosely over her shoulders, and wearing a large high-crowned white bonnet, with blue ribands, tied under the chin with a white veil, very much in the style of the head-dress in the portrait of Mrs. Lee Acton, and possibly painted about the same time, for the handling is free and loose.

A well-known example of Romney's power of depicting womanly beauty, the portrait of Mrs. Bryan Cooke, was lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1896 by Mr. Philip Davies Cooke. The lady represented was Frances, daughter of Philip Puleston, who married Bryan Cooke, of Owston, and M.P. for Malton. It is a three-quarter-length figure, seated, looking at the spectator, with hands clasped on her lap, her right arm resting on a balustrade, and dressed in white, with blue sash, and a large black hat with white feathers.

Another excellent example, the portrait of Mrs. Van der Gucht, a

[1] May 8th, 1905.

half-length, seated, with left elbow on the arm of her chair, in a light-coloured riding dress, a large black hat, and a whip in her hands, seen against a deep blue sky, was lent by Mr. Brodie A. Willcox to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1894. It is very solidly, carefully, and broadly painted, with an unusually warm and golden tone, and well drawn and modelled. It is one of his most delightful appreciations of the charms of fair and buxom womanhood, with rosy cheeks, light eyes, and fresh complexion.

Turning again to his portraits of children, it will be found that in the years throughout which Emma Hart sat so constantly to him, and during those which followed, Romney painted many a canvas which has all the charm and simplicity which marked his renderings of them when he was fresh from the picture-galleries of Italy.

One of his most delightful portraits of this class—indeed, one of the most charming pictures he ever painted—is that of little Miss Charlotte Peirse, which attracted keen competition when it came into the market in 1900, fetching no less than 7000 guineas. This little lady was born in 1780, and was married in 1797 to Inigo Freeman Thomas of Ratton, Sussex, and died at Lisbon three years later at the age of twenty. She is represented at full-length, walking in a landscape, in a white muslin dress with a blue sash, and a large straw bonnet, the strings of which she holds in her hands. She was some relation, perhaps a daughter, of the Mr. Peirse who came to the artist's rescue when he was stranded in Paris, in 1775, without means of getting home.

A large canvas representing a boy of ten or twelve, 'Master John Bensley Thornhill,' was lent to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1906, No. 76, by Major-General C. Powlett Lane. The lad stands at full-length in a wooded landscape, leaning with his right elbow against a rock and his head resting against his bent hand, the left arm hanging by his side, and his legs crossed. His light brown hair curls upon his neck, and he is dressed in a brown coat and breeches, a white waistcoat and stockings, and large frilled collar. This is one of Romney's 'pretty' boys, with a sweet and pensive expression of face, though not so fine a character study as the 'Lord Henry Petty'; but the canvas has much darkened, and it would gain in quality if carefully cleaned. The background, with its large tree-trunks and usual glimpse of distant landscape, and stormy sky low down on the left, and its lumpy rocks and few carelessly drawn plants in the foreground, is empty and perfunctory.

Another very attractive portrait of a child is the unnamed 'Boy in

a Brown Dress,' which is well known, as it has been exhibited frequently. It is a full-length of a little yellow-haired lad, walking on the sea-shore, looking at the spectator, and dressed in a plain brown suit with a broad frilled collar. He carries a wide-brimmed drab felt hat in his left hand, while his right thumb and middle finger are passed through a button-hole of his vest. It is owned by Mr. G. E. B. Eyre.

Two good groups of children were included in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1893. The first represented Mary and Louisa Kent, daughters of Sir Charles Kent, Bart., three-quarter-length figures, in white frocks, seated under a tree, one holding a crook and caressing the head of a lamb. The elder girl married, in 1811, John Hayford Thorold, afterwards Sir John Thorold, Bart., by whose descendant the picture was lent. It is a very harmonious group in unusually warm and golden tones. The second was 'Lady Prescott and her three Children,' lent by Mr. E. L. Raphael, the three-quarter-length figure of a lady in a grey dress and large black hat, seated to the left under a tree looking towards the spectator, with the youngest child in her lap, while the two others stand in front of her holding cherries.

A third good group is that of the daughters of Charles Boone, M.P. for Castle Rising, at one time Governor of South Carolina. The elder sister, afterwards Lady Drummond, in a red dress with blue ribbons, is reclining under some trees, while her younger sister, dressed in white with a blue sash, stands behind her. Both of them are holding a branch of the tree above them. This picture was lent to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1904 by Mr. T. C. Garth. Sir Joshua painted Lady Drummond and her mother in 1774.

In conclusion, attention must be drawn to one of the most sympathetic groups he painted towards the latter part of his life, that of the 'Horsley Children,' which was exhibited at the Grafton Gallery in 1900 by Mr. F. B. Macdonald, to whom it had been bequeathed by George Horsley, one of the children represented in it. It afterwards passed into the possession of Lady Gordon Cumming, of Altyre, Forres, N.B. They were the children of Mr. George Horsley, Commissary of the Bombay Army, of Epsom, and his wife, Charlotte, daughter of Sir George Talbot, Bart. The little girl, Charlotte, is shown standing on the steps of a terrace, looking round at the spectator, holding a cornflower in her left hand, and with the other

about to give a bunch of them to her small brother, who stands below with his frock held up to catch them. Both are dressed in white with blue sashes, and straight smooth hair falling on their foreheads. It is a good example of Romney's painting of rather flat white draperies, with few folds, but well modelled. According to a writer in *The Times*[1] it was painted in the autumn of 1793. It was sold at Messrs. Christie's in May, 1905, and purchased by Messrs. Thomas Agnew and Sons for £4620.

The mother's portrait by Romney (30 × 24), in a grey dress, black lace cloak, and small straw bonnet tied under the chin, was lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1887 (No. 18), by Mr. Edward H. Palmer.

[1] May 8th, 1905.

XXV

IN his full-length portraits of noble lords in their robes and orders, such as Earl Gower, Sir Robert Gunning, or Lord-Chancellor Thurlow, and of ladies of high degree, such as the Margravine of Anspach, 'state portraits' in which the sumptuousness of the dress was of as much importance to the sitter as a good likeness, Romney was not always so successful as in his smaller and more 'intimate' canvases, in which he was mainly occupied with the grace and beauty of his sitter, while questions of costume were reduced to a simple gown or coat such as he always painted so dexterously. In the larger canvases, with his habit of generalisation, there is often a lack of interest in such details, a flatness and emptiness which assert themselves much more strongly than in his less ambitious pictures. There are exceptions to this, of course, such as the severely dignified 'Lady Newdigate,' one of his most impressive pictures, in which the sweep of the plain white satin draperies is admirably expressed; in the 'Mrs. Maxwell' and others; but, taking them as a body, they seem thin and ineffectual by the side of many of Sir Joshua's noble full-lengths. Such a portrait as the 'Mrs., afterwards Lady Milnes,' belonging to the Earl of Crewe, elegant in design as it may be, loses some of its attractiveness when hanging, as it did a year or two ago in a London exhibition room,[1] near such a masterpiece by Reynolds as the 'Lady Elizabeth Compton.' The rich glowing colour, the vivacity and sense of movement in the latter make it singularly alive, and though the decorative effect of the Romney is unmistakable, in other respects it suffers somewhat severely by the contrast, for his art failed in its grasp of reality, and was much more restricted in range than that of the older artist, who must always be regarded as the true head of the modern school of portrait-painting.

Romney, nevertheless, produced a number of full-lengths of very

[1] Messrs. Agnew and Sons, 1904.

exceptional qualities. More than one of these has been already described, such as the 'Lady Newdigate'; several others, among the best that he accomplished, are reproduced in this book through the kindness of the present owners. One of the best known is the portrait of the beautiful 'Mrs. Townley Ward' belonging to Lord Aldenham, which was in the Romney Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery in 1900. This is one of his most 'statuesque' canvases, and is remarkable for the fine design of the draperies. Mrs. Townley Ward, a well-known society beauty, was the eldest daughter of William Hucks, of Knaresborough. Romney painted her in 1780. John Thomas Smith, in his *Nollekens and his Times*, speaks of the great beauty of this lady when describing John K. Sherwin's drawing of 'The Finding of Moses'—which was the talk of the town at the time—in which he introduced portraits of the Princess Royal as Pharaoh's Daughter, and the ladies of the Court most distinguished for beauty as her attendants: 'Lady Duncannon, and her sisters, the Duchess of Devonshire, were in the centre of the composition, surrounded by the rest who composed the group, the Ladies Jersey, the Duchess of Rutland, etc. This drawing, from the preference shown, made Sherwin many enemies in society. Indeed, on the other hand, he gave much offence even to some of those ladies whose portraits he *had* introduced, by placing that of Mrs. Townley Ward, whose features were certainly of the grand cast, near to a Duchess, whose beauty could not stand the comparison.' Mr. Charles Wertheimer's portrait of 'Mrs. Maxwell' is another of his successes in the skilful and graceful arrangement of a flowing robe based upon a classical model. The lady's fair, expressive face is seen against a wooded background of greater elaboration than usual. The 'Anne, Lady Townshend,' in Lady Yarborough's collection, later in date, is simpler in arrangement. The long white dress with its high waist and close-fitting sleeves, is much more broadly and simply treated in long straight folds. Her hair is bound round with a large white scarf or turban, and she leans with one elbow on a tall stone pillar on which a small sacrificial lamp is dimly burning. The classicism of the theme is carried still further in the background, with its dark tree-trunks suggesting some grove sacred to antique god or goddess. In the full-length of the 'Margravine of Anspach' (Lady Craven), painted almost at the end of his life, Romney has revelled in the painting of his favourite white satin, and the shimmer of this material has been caught with great skill, and serves as an admirable foil to the handsome face. It is dated 1797, and belongs to Lady

O'Hagan, and is a replica of the one in the possession of the Fishmongers' Company, which hangs in their hall with the companion canvas of her husband. It is a notable proof that Romney, even when his days were numbered and his health greatly shattered, still retained much of the executive brilliancy of his maturity. Romney had painted the Margravine nearly twenty years earlier, when she was Countess of Craven, the 'three-quarters' portrait now in the National Gallery, No. 1669, which was originally in the possession of Horace Walpole, who in 1779 wrote some verses in praise of Romney and his sitter which he included in the catalogue of his pictures and works of art at Strawberry Hill. The lady was the daughter of the fourth Earl of Berkeley, and married in 1767, when she was seventeen, William, sixth Earl of Craven. The marriage was a very unhappy one, and the Countess caused considerable talk in society through her relationship with Christian Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, and Bayreuth, a nephew of Caroline of Anspach, queen of George II., whom she eventually married after the death of Lord Craven. The Margrave sold his principalities in 1790 to the King of Prussia, and settled in England. Lady Craven wrote her own memoirs, and several other works, and died at Naples in 1828. Lady O'Hagan's full-length portrait of her reproduced here (see Plate LVI.) is four years later in date than the one belonging to the Fishmongers' Company, which was painted in 1793. The latter was exhibited at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1877, No. 234, together with that of her husband.

The Margravine does not appear to have been very satisfied with Romney's renderings of her. In her amusing *Memoirs*, published in two volumes in 1826, she says: 'It is a matter of regret to me, that there is no picture of me which has done me justice, nor is even like me. The figure, in all the whole lengths, is spoiled; and even Madame Le Brun, who painted a three-quarters' length of me, has made an arm and hand out of all proportion to the chest and shoulders. The picture of me by Romney, which was at Brandenburgh House, and is now, with that of my two sons Berkeley and Keppel, removed to Benham, has by no means given a just idea either of my face or figure; the former is too severe, and the latter much too large. He deserves, however, great praise for that in which my two sons are painted, the eldest leaning on the youngest's shoulder, when about the age of seventeen or eighteen, and in which both the likenesses and figures are well preserved. These two elegant young men were models for

an artist; but I shall not dwell upon them now as I shall have to speak of them hereafter' (vol. i. p. 12).

Although it has nothing to do with Romney, her account of the reproof administered by Dr. Johnson to Sir Joshua Reynolds respecting her unfinished portrait by the latter, is too interesting to omit. 'One evening,' she says, 'at a party at Lady Lucan's, when Johnson was announced, she rose and made him the most flattering compliments; but he interrupted her, by saying "Fiddle! faddle, madam," and turned his back upon her, and left her standing by herself in the middle of the room. He then took his seat by me, which Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was present, perceiving, he came and sat down by us. Johnson asked him what was the reason he had refused to finish the picture for which I had sat six times: Reynolds was much embarrassed, and said, laughing, "There is something so comical in the lady's face, that all my art cannot describe it." Johnson repeated the word comical ten times, in every different tone, and finished in that of anger. He then gave such a scolding to his friend, that he was much more embarrassed than before, or than even I was, to be the cause of it.

'That picture is now at Petworth: it was bought at Sir Joshua's sale, after his death, by Lord Egremont. Angelica Kauffmann painted one for me a fortnight before I was married to Mr. Craven. It is a Hebe. I sat for it, and made a present of it to Colonel Colleton's widow, who had given me the 500*l.* to deck me out in wedding clothes. She was godmother to my second daughter, the present Countess of Sefton, and left her that picture by will when Maria was only two years old; and that which delighted her father, hung up in his dressing-room for years: she never has asked for it, and I dare say never will' (vol. ii. p. 114).

A letter from Miss Seward to Mrs. Childers, dated August 16th, 1797, from the newly discovered watering-place then called Hoyle Lake, now famous for its golf-links, shows how the lady was regarded by the worthy gossips and scandalmongers of the day. 'On the 6th,' she writes, 'arrived the fair frail Margravine of Anspach, attended only by domestics. The pride of virtue seemed prodigiously to alarm our ladies about the manner in which it would be proper to treat her; or whether they were to receive or decline her civilities, should they be offered; but the consultations proved needless,—she has lived wholly in private. I have seen her only once—it was on the stairs. On my stopping to give her way, a radiant smile of conciliation

beamed from her eye and lip. I sighed to think that the heart, whose effluence that engaging smile seemed to be, could ever have been libertine.'

Lord Hillingdon owns the beautiful full-length of Mrs. Powys, the friend and correspondent of Miss Seward, and wife of Thomas Jelf Powys, of Berwick House, Salop. She is seated to the left in a landscape, in a chair underneath an overhanging tree, leaning forward, and looking with a faint smile towards the spectator, resting her left elbow on her knee with the hand touching her chin, and holding a book in her lap with the right. She is dressed in white with a pink sash, and a large white scarf or turban on her curled hair, with long ends falling down behind to her waist, a form of head-dress to be seen in a number of Romney's portraits. On the right there is a distant view of a landscape with a river. It was lent by the Earl of Denbigh to the Royal Academy in 1879, and again in 1891 by Lord Hillingdon, and is reproduced in Mrs. Gamlin's book.

Two fine full-lengths of ladies were lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition of 1896 by Lord Iveagh. The portrait of Mrs. Webster, afterwards Lady Holland, is a remarkable example, showing Romney in one of his most Grecian moods. The lady, with her fair hair falling upon her shoulders, stands in a landscape by a pedestal or marble altar, on which a sacrificial vase is placed. She is looking up, with right hand upraised, to greet the sun rising behind lofty mountains, in the character of Clytie hailing the advent of Phœbus Apollo. A representation of the sun decorates the altar, on which her right elbow rests, and also forms part of the ornament of her white dress, while a sunflower is fastened at her bosom, and her head-dress or coronet is made of white plumes. The attitude is a graceful one, and the arrangement and painting of the draperies show the artist to the greatest advantage. The lady, who thus posed as the mistress of a Greek god, was Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Vassall, of Jamaica. Her first marriage, with Godfrey Webster, was dissolved by Parliament, and she afterwards married Henry Richard, Lord Holland, who took the name of Vassall. The second portrait was of Mrs. Willett, seated in a landscape, with hands folded on her lap, in a low-cut white dress, a blue sash, and a large straw hat with blue ribbons. A second portrait of her, a half-length, was No. 84 in the James Price sale, June 15th, 1895. It is an oval, and she is represented with her chin resting on her left hand. Another full-length portrait of a lady in a white dress, with blue hair-ribbon and sash,

Miss Sarah Rodbard, was sold at Messrs. Christie's on June 14th, 1902, and purchased, after a very spirited contest, by Messrs. Agnew for the sum of 10,500 guineas. The lady, with hair curling to her shoulders, stands in a landscape, her arms resting upon a stone pedestal, upon the top of which a small skye-terrier is perched. It was the property of Mr. Eyre Coote, of West Park, Salisbury, a descendant of the lady.

One of Romney's most important full-lengths is the group of Sir Christopher and Lady Sykes, which still hangs at Sledmere. It has been recently engraved for the first time, under the title of 'The Evening Walk.' It is a very fine work, in which the couple are shown walking arm-in-arm in their own grounds, accompanied by a fat dog. Sir Christopher wears a long scarlet coat, and his wife is in white satin and powdered hair. The columns of a temple are seen on one side, and the background is a landscape with trees, and the family mansion on high ground in the distance.

Romney lacked both the intellectuality of Reynolds and the spirituality of Gainsborough, though in his best works there is no want of character, more particularly in his representations of men. The portrait of himself in the National Portrait Gallery is a fine piece of character-reading, giving the moody, suspicious, poetic dreamer to the life, while his likenesses of Hayley suggest the shallowness and self-esteem of that amiable belauder of his friends, and scribbler of dull and trivial verse. His fine 'Gibbon' has been already described.[1] In the 'Thurlow'—a man Romney greatly admired—he has been successful in suggesting a personality possessing keen insight and intellect; and in his rendering of divines, such as the 'Wesley,' there is real appreciation of the calling and character of the sitter. His portraits of men of less importance, country squires, substantial citizens, his own personal friends, and the like, painted in a simple and straightforward manner, have dignity and a manly bearing which stamp them with an air of truth. Such qualities as these he understood and reproduced with ease, but the more subtle traits of character, if not unobserved, were at least less often attempted. He never achieved a likeness as complex as the 'Sterne' of Sir Joshua, and rarely one as sympathetic in its insight as the 'Sheridan' or 'Garrick' of Gainsborough.

Among the best of his portraits of men are those of his own intimate friends. To paint them was a labour of love, and, as was

[1] See page 129.

natural, he obtained a surer grasp of their true character than when occupied with casual sitters about whom he knew little or nothing. The crayon portrait of 'William Cowper,' done at Eartham in 1792, is one of his most powerful studies, which goes much deeper than the mere delineation of the outward features of the man and poet. It is drawn with great vigour and decision, and is by far the best portrait of Cowper in existence, and may be cited in evidence against those who hold that Romney was always an inferior painter. (See Plate XIX.) His portraits of Hayley, though not untinged by the flattery of friendship—notably in the full-length in which Flaxman is represented as modelling his bust, belonging to Mr. H. W. Dawson-Greene, of Whittington Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale, the descendant of his old friend and admirer, Thomas Greene, in which Hayley's figure is of undue length (see Plate XXII.)—are, nevertheless, admirable in their indication of the character of one who was a curious mixture of shallowness and enthusiasm. The best of them is, perhaps, the first Romney painted of him—the half-length engraved by Jacobé in 1779, in which his head rests on his elbow supported by a tall folio placed upright on a table, now in Mr. C. Fairfax Murray's collection. (See Plate IV.) The head of Flaxman in the 'Modelling' picture is another truthful and affectionate study, in this case of a fine and lovable character, and one fired with a true passion for art. The later of the two portraits of Richard Cumberland, in plum-coloured velvet trimmed with brown fur, in the National Portrait Gallery, is a good example of his style of work shortly after his return from Italy (see Plate II.); and a still finer example is the portrait of the Rev. Thomas Carwardine, of Colne Priory, Essex, which was one of the first canvases he painted after he was back again in London.

The small half-length of 'James Martin,' of Overbury Park, banker, and M.P. for Tewkesbury in nine successive Parliaments, is one of his simple, straightforward portraits, manly in bearing and broadly executed. This picture, and a companion one of 'Richard Stone,' of similar qualities, both in the possession of Mr. R. Biddulph Martin, were exhibited at Birmingham in 1900. While making no pretensions to be great portraiture, they are honest and sincere, and attract by the evident truth of their rendering of uncomplex personalities. Colonel Tremayne's portrait of 'Sir William Lemon,' of Carclew, Cornwall, M.P. for Penryn, is a still finer example of these qualities, in which the handsome, dignified face and aristocratic bearing have been rendered with directness and truth. (See Plate LVII.)

The sympathetic likeness of John Wesley, in which the spiritual side of his character is admirably caught, has been already described.[1]

One of the best portraits of a man Romney ever painted is the half-length of John Oglander, D.D., Warden of New College, Oxford, which was No. 118 in the Oxford Exhibition, 1906. It is the likeness of a handsome man with an expressive mouth, wearing a white wig, black gown and square bands, his right hand, which holds a pen, resting on a paper in front of him. As a study of character it shows Romney at his best, and in its flesh painting it is masterly. It is beautifully luminous in the shadows, and the head, though delicately painted, stands out firmly and strongly against the harmonious warm grey-brown background. The plain folds of the black gown are well arranged. It is, in fact, simple and direct in its methods, and there is a liquid flow in the brush-work which produces very happy results. According to the Oxford catalogue it was painted in 1778 for the sum of eighteen guineas. (See Plate LVIII.)

There is, too, a fine full-length portrait of Warren Hastings by him which is hanging in the India Office, behind the Secretary of State's chair. It possesses much character, but is now rather brown in tone, probably through discoloured varnish. It is reproduced in Messrs. Humphry Ward and Roberts' book.

Romney could be usually depended upon to produce a good, manly, straightforward portrait of a soldier or a sailor. Such an one is the three-quarter-length of Sir George Osborn, Bart., lent by Sir Algernon K. Osborn to the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1906, No. 53. This elderly man, with blue cheeks and chin, in all the bravery of red coat with blue facings and gold braid, and pale grey waistcoat and breeches, is shown nearly to the knees, with his right arm on a gun, against a background of black clouds, as though thick with battle smoke, while below on the left a glimpse of the sea and fortifications is obtained.

Another of his virile studies of men is the portrait of Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Campbell, K.B., governor and commander-in-chief on the coast of Coromandel, East Indies, in 1787, which was lent to the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition in 1882 by General J. Studholme Brownrigg. It is a three-quarter-length, in uniform, with cocked hat in his hand, which rests on a stick, and in the distance a view of Fort George, Madras.

A third example, the portrait of Lieut.-General Robertson, R.E.,

[1] See page 155.

of Lawers, was exhibited by Messrs. Agnew and Sons in 1905. It is a three-quarter-length figure, standing nearly full face, with powdered and curled hair tied at the back, and red coat with black facings and gold epaulettes, and white waistcoat and breeches. His left hand rests on his sword, and he holds a paper in his right. It is broadly and solidly painted, and of a richer and more golden tone than is usual with Romney. The background shows the mouth of a harbour with buildings, a lighthouse on a headland, and a sky filled with dark, stormy clouds.

He was, however, more often and more completely successful in his portraits of younger men. Youth and good looks made just as strong an appeal to him in his portraits of men as of women, and the contemplation of them usually impelled him to the utmost exertion of his powers. Good health and handsome features, the insolence of youth and an aristocratic carriage, were the distinguishing marks of the gay sparks of fashion who went to him for their portraits. It was seldom that great profundity of character or depth of feeling was to be found in the ranks which they adorned. This distinguished bearing is admirably caught in such portraits as that of the young 'Marquis of Stafford' (see Plate VI.), or the group of 'Berkeley and Keppel Craven,' with their delicately chiselled features and air of high breeding, while the Van Dyck costume which Romney, in common with Reynolds and Gainsborough, used on occasion, enhances the natural and graceful carriage of the slim figures. (See Plate LIX.) There was, no doubt, some little exaggeration on the part of the artist, which resulted in a sacrifice of character in the search for elegance and refinement of features; for the habits and training of the young men about town of his day were not of a nature to produce an over-refinement either in ideas or in appearance. Still, such portraits as that of the Earl of Westmorland, in the uniform of the Guards, or of Thomas Grove, have a manly beauty and winning charm which are most attractive.

The three-quarter-length portrait of the Earl of Westmorland, belonging to the Earl of Jersey, which is reproduced in Sir Herbert Maxwell's book, is indeed one of his most brilliant representations of a handsome young aristocrat, and it and its equally beautiful companion picture of the Countess, the daughter of Richard Child, the banker, with whom the young Earl ran away to Gretna Green, make a pair which Romney rarely surpassed. The 'Thomas Grove,' of Ferne, Wilts, Master of Hounds, in the collection of Sir Walter Grove, Bart., is a frank and manly picture of a young country squire,

possessed of health, good looks, and a happy disposition. The handling is free and spirited, and the pose simple and unaffected. (See Plate LX.) The portrait of 'Sir John Reade,' now in the Elkins collection, in America, has much in common with it. Another portrait of a handsome youth is that of Sir J. Yorke, in the possession of his descendant, the Hon. John Yorke.

Some of his most attractive portraits of boys are to be found in the Provost's Lodge, Eton College, including Earl Grey, Samuel Whitbread, Lord Grenville, and the Marquess Wellesley, which were painted as presents to the headmaster when the boys left Eton. The two last-named were exhibited at the Guelph Exhibition in 1891.

A very charming rendering of a young man, painted shortly after his return from Italy, is the portrait of George Parker, afterwards Earl of Macclesfield. He sat to the artist just when he came of age, the year before he entered Parliament as M.P. for Woodstock. It is a half-length, quiet and restrained, with careful handling in the flesh painting, showing a delicate and refined face, with arched eyebrows and brown hair, brushed high over the forehead, and slight curls over the ears and the nape of the neck. The arms are shown only to the elbows. Over his shoulders he wears a green cloak trimmed with gold braid, probably a Masonic gown, which was originally blue, but has changed colour with time. The head stands out against a dark stormy sky, and below on the left there is a glimpse of a distant landscape, with a low hill something like Vesuvius. It was No. 200 in the Oxford Exhibition, 1906, and according to the catalogue was painted in 1776-7 for a fee of eighteen guineas. It was presented by the sitter to Thomas Bray, rector of Exeter College, as soon as it was finished. Other portraits exhibited at Oxford were No. 181, Shute Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, painted in 1784, and No. 199, Thomas Reynolds Moreton, Earl of Ducie, a copy by Theophilus Clarke of a lost original by Romney, to whom, according to the Oxford catalogue, the Earl sat in 1794.

He painted a number of handsome young men of a more ordinary type, with no great inspiration, such as the portrait of Ralph William Cartwright, of Aynhoe, which was No. 88 in the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1906, lent by Mr. W. C. Cartwright. It was done about 1789, and is a half-length, facing the spectator, with the head turned to the left. He wears a blue velvet coat with high collar, a white neckcloth tied in a bow, and a black cloak over his shoulders. The powdered hair has been put in with hasty, 'feathery' touches, and the flesh painting is of a golden-brown tone.

It was, however, his power of idealising womanly beauty which made his studio so popular, while the purity and simplicity of his treatment, from its very novelty, proved peculiarly attractive to society ladies who were the slaves of a fashion in dress which had been growing more outrageous every year. He had the art of giving not only an undoubted likeness, but also of suffusing his canvas with that sense of beauty and of grace, which was in certain instances, perhaps, a little lacking in the sitters themselves. This grace—the word has to be used so often that it becomes monotonous—is a little difficult to define accurately in words, but is felt readily enough in front of the canvas itself.

It is in these portraits of women and children that his art reaches its highest manifestations. Putting aside the many merely 'pretty' examples, which possess little or no character, but merely a cloying sweetness, there are still a large number remaining, such as those described in the preceding chapter, which show him as a painter of brilliant capabilities, with a tender appreciation of the flower-like beauty of English girlhood and radiant youth, such as few others of his contemporaries could show to an equal degree. In such a portrait as that of the Hon. Louisa Cathcart, Countess of Mansfield, a splendid example of his most sculpturesque form of art, the colour is both delicate and subtle; the pose, though based on a classical convention, is natural, graceful, and dignified; and the features, with their almost Grecian severity, have beauty of character as well as mere surface loveliness. In such an example as this, and in many others which have been named, there is much more than a mere delight in the rendering of lovely, glowing womanhood; there is a purity and refinement in the conception both of character, outline, and colour, which places them on a very high level, and they will always suffice to make good Romney's claims to a position high up in the roll of the world's great painters. Several of these fine things, upon which his fame must ultimately rest, have been described in the preceding pages, and more than one of them is reproduced in this volume; and each grows in delight as its forms, composition, and colouring are studied. The 'Mrs. Lee Acton' has been already extolled as a canvas in which Romney's art is supreme. Few portraits so purely conceived, so characteristic of the fresh and glowing beauty of winsome English girlhood, have ever been accomplished in this country. It is a true classic of the British school, and to the man who painted it the name of master must be accorded. If he was not always as fine as this, he

not seldom came near it, in portraits in which the exceptional richness and delicacy of the flesh tints, and the fine though simple taste and drawing of the draperies, show how far he could go when he was both in sympathy with his subject, and more careful and deliberate in his methods than his crowds of sitters and his rapidity of handling often allowed him to be.

At times he could paint a head with such boldness and unhesitating vigour that it produces a vivid, almost startling, effect of vitality. Such portraits as the 'Mrs. Clayton Glyn,' belonging to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, 'Miss Finch-Hatton,' in Mr. Frick's collection in America, or the 'Mrs. Rattray' and 'Miss Mary Johnson' illustrated here, are fine examples of his command of a rapid and assured technique. (See Plates LXI. and LXII.) In such as these he approaches his subject with no uncertainty or hesitation, but expresses what he wishes to convey at once, and with an easy mastery of his materials. They may lack something of the purely decorative grace of his more careful work, but they possess on the other hand an energy and directness which are as attractive as they are unusual with him. In them all other parts of the canvas are subordinated to the head itself, which is placed upon it with such boldness and force that it may easily have been completed after one or two short sittings. It is true that in many instances this subordination of the dress and background may be due to some extent to Romney's curious inability to finish his work, which grew more marked towards the end of his life. As already seen, it was not unusual for him to keep a portrait for three or four years before he would let it go, and no doubt occasions arose when unusually impatient sitters took away their unfinished likenesses in despair of ever getting the last touches put upon them. In such as these, the dress is merely indicated with a few bold touches, dashed in with a hasty brush, which in themselves have little or no beauty, and so are in marked contrast to his more elaborately finished draperies.

The portrait of Miss Finch-Hatton is an exceptionally good example of his mastery of technique. The painting of the elaborately dressed hair with its powdered curls, and the modelling of the face of this handsome young lady of somewhat opulent charms, are both admirable, and display to the full the power of an assured and unfaltering hand. There is here less of that purely decorative grace which has been noted as one of the most attractive qualities of many of his earliest portraits, while, on the other hand, he has been unusually successful in suggesting the character of his sitter, which is one of energy and

determination. It bears a close resemblance in arrangement and method to the 'Mrs. Clayton Glyn.'

In his portraits of children he was often supremely happy, and it is curious that a man whose own children were almost unknown to him, for his little girl died when barely three years old, and his son was almost a stranger to him until he had reached man's estate, should yet have been so keenly sympathetic in his renderings of childhood. Such subjects were never treated more happily by either Sir Joshua or Gainsborough. Their delicate, almost spiritual beauty made the strongest appeal to him, and he was almost always entirely successful in painting them. Here again, sweetness and grace were what he chiefly looked for and found, and the happy innocence of infancy was never more delightfully expressed.

Some of the best of them have been described on earlier pages. Nothing could well be more charming than such a group as that of the little Stanleys, son and daughter of the Earl of Derby, the boy with his head turned over his shoulder and the girl with a bird held up to her chin. The action of little Maria Clavering, clasping her puppy, is just as true and delightful, while the arrangement of her flowing scarf, blown into arabesques by the wind, is frankly decorative.

His children are always little ladies and gentlemen; quiet almost to sedateness on occasion, like 'Lord Henry Petty,' or serious almost to primness, like the Thurlow sisters, in their best frocks and on their best behaviour; but always fresh and innocent, and breathing the real air of happy youth. They lack, perhaps, the vivacity and that suggestion of almost malicious slyness and mischievousness which mark some of Sir Joshua's portraits of children, and the more exuberant qualities of youth; and they do not, perhaps, show quite the same insight as is to be found in such a portrait as Gainsborough's 'Miss Tryon,' in the Wallace Collection, but they possess, nevertheless, a charm and sweetness all their own, which explains the eagerness of affectionate parents to take their children to his studio.

It is when Romney brings mother and child together on a single canvas that he reaches a point beyond which even his greatest contemporaries could not go. Such a combination made an irresistible appeal to the finest feelings of which he was capable, and imbued his art with a deeper and purer insight, bringing into play that strain of true poetry which burned within him. The contemplation of motherhood roused in him the tenderest emotions, and he pictured it with singular happiness and nobility, so that the intensity of the love

which binds mother and child has been rarely conceived with truer understanding, or more sweetly and simply set on canvas. It is, perhaps, in subjects such as these that his Italian studies are most apparent, for more than one of them suggests a Madonna and Child.

This sentiment of maternal love finds very noble expression in the group of Mrs. Carwardine and her baby boy, and is seen again very perfectly, and with a singular elegance of design, in the portrait of the Duchess of Gordon and her son. In the unknown 'Mother and Child' in the National Gallery there is a pathetic wistfulness portrayed on the mother's face, as she clasps her child closely to her, as though fearing to lose it, which is in striking contrast to the smiles and laughter of the 'Mrs. Canning,' which is one of the most enchanting pictures of the delight of mother and child in one another which has ever been painted.

Examples could be multiplied if the point needed emphasis: pictures such as the 'Mrs. Morris and Child,' in which the little one stands upright on her mother's knee, with one small arm flung round her neck, while the mother clasps the child's hands and lays her cheek against its chest;[1] or the one already described, of Lady Russell holding up her boy so that he may look at himself in the glass, a very happy and natural pose.

In all of these, and in those larger groups in which more than one child is introduced, such as the 'Mrs. Stables' and the 'Countess of Warwick' pictures, Romney displays so sympathetic and tender a feeling, that so long as his canvases endure they will be a source of constant delight to all who come under their spell.

Though he cannot be regarded as an animal painter, Romney, like more than one of his artistic contemporaries, loved dogs and sometimes painted them well, and nearly always quite adequately. He introduced them with good effect into some of his earliest pictures. The dog in the small full-length of Mr. Jacob Morland, in the National Gallery, already mentioned, though painted in a hard manner, has been studied from life with great care. At times he failed, as in the greyhound in the early portrait of Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle, and in the bounding animal in 'Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante.'

There is a capital fox-terrier in the portrait of the Duchess of Gordon, reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, and in

[1] Exhibited at the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition, 1882, No. 169, by General C. Morris, and said in the catalogue to have been painted in 1777.

the *Burlington Magazine* for February 1904, and a good skye-terrier in the full-length of Miss Sarah Rodbard. Equal praise can be given to the dogs in the Clavering Children group, in the portraits of Thomas and John Fane, in the late Lord Burton's collection, and in Romney's first portrait of the fair Emma, now known as 'Nature.' There is also an excellent one in the portrait of an unknown boy in a white dress, with golden hair, a slight but very beautiful work, which was formerly in the S. Mendel and Miéville collections, and realised 210 guineas at the former sale in 1875, and 1650 guineas at the latter in 1897. The boy is nursing the dog in his arms. On the other hand, the animal in the fine full-length group of Sir Christopher and Lady Sykes is a lumpish-looking creature, but it may have been an old family favourite, grown old, and fat, and scant of breath.

In his more rapid sketches and hasty studies for pictures Romney now and then succeeded in getting very doggish characteristics with a few bold strokes, as in the animal, for instance, which he has indicated lying lazily by the side of the chair in which the fair 'Sempstress' is seated, in Captain Josceline Bagot's first study for that well-known picture. Two dogs are dashed in in the same bold way in a beautiful sepia study, belonging to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, for a portrait of a mother and child in a landscape, looking at a book.[1]

In the few attempts he made to represent other animals he was less successful. More than one canvas was laid aside unfinished, owing to the want of the necessary model—some fawn, or goat, for instance, from which to paint; and in more than one case, such as the 'Alope,'[2] he was obliged to call in the aid of a brother painter. Lions and tigers he knew nothing about, and so wisely went to Gilpin for assistance. The wolves and the leopard crouching at the feet of Lady Hamilton in the 'Circe' picture were painted in, with very infelicitous results, by his friend Long, the surgeon, who purchased the canvas at Romney's sale. In all probability these additions were not the original idea of the purchaser, but had been roughly indicated by the artist, with every intention of finishing them at some later date, whenever an opportunity arose of making studies from the life of the necessary wild beasts. Here and there, too, sketches are to be found, among the drawings at Cambridge and elsewhere, in which horses or cattle are included. Three of the designs in the Fitzwilliam Museum are taken from the pastoral romance of Longus, in one of

[1] See page 364.

[2] The lions are said to have been painted by Gilpin.

which he has introduced a rapidly drawn herd of cattle with good effect.

It was his intention—how often has this to be said of him!—to have painted from these last-mentioned studies a couple of pictures, with figures the size of life, and he had prepared a place behind his painting-room to which cattle might be brought, in order that he might paint them directly from Nature. 'It is to be regretted,' says his son, 'that other engagements at the time interfered with this scheme.'

John Romney speaks more than once, with some slight filial exaggeration, of his father's skill in the painting of dogs. Of the pointer in the portrait of Jacob Morland he says:—'No representation can approach nearer to the truth of nature than the portrait of this dog; the sleekness of the skin, and the characteristic sagacity of the animal are so well depicted as to give it the appearance of reality'; and he thinks that the three spaniels in the early portrait of Colonel George Wilson 'are painted in a style that would do credit to the pencil of Snyders.' He returns to the subject in another place, declaring that Romney 'by a rare rapidity and facility of pencil, could impart to them all the apparent action and vivacity of life,' instancing as a proof of this contention the Pomeranian dog in the portrait of Master Paine, the spaniels in the Clavering picture, and a 'Spaniel baiting a Cat' painted for the Duchess of Richmond, the wife of one of his earliest patrons in London.

Still less often did he attempt to paint horses. He has introduced one very prominently in the 'Shipwreck' picture, but this is only known to-day by the engraving Blake made of it for Hayley's book. There is a good horse, too, in the whole-length portrait of John Walter Tempest, engraved by James Walker in 1781, in which the animal is stooping to drink at a pool, his young master, standing by his side, holding the reins; and another in the full-length of John Christian Curwen, which is not so good; while a third is represented in the portrait of Colonel Braddyll, though this is said to have been painted by Gilpin.

It must be allowed, however, that he was an animal painter of only modest abilities, and that even his dogs were rarely as good as Sir Joshua's, and in no way equal to those which Gainsborough was so fond of introducing into his portraits.

XXVI

ROMNEY at his best was one of the simplest and most natural of painters. His technical range was a narrow one, and in practice he very rarely departed from the methods which marked his earliest efforts—methods which were the result of his own experiments and experience, and owed little or nothing to the precepts of any particular school, or the instruction of any one master. His limitations were narrow when compared with those of some of his contemporaries, but within them he accomplished much work of superfine quality, imbued with a delicate appreciation of physical beauty, a grace of line, and simplicity and dignity of design; so that his best portraits make an irresistible appeal both by the purity of their conception and by the loveliness of the vision which the painter saw so vividly and set upon his canvas with such directness and sympathy. When gazing upon them his faults are forgotten; and that he had faults, often serious ones, must be acknowledged by even his greatest admirers. His drawing was frequently faulty, and at times bad, while throughout his whole career his knowledge of anatomy was superficial and inadequate. He was hampered at all points by his lack of sound early training. If, when still a young man, he had been placed for a year or two with some artist of real ability, he might have attained to the highest rank among the greatest portrait painters of his own or earlier days.

As it was, in spite of incessant labour to improve, more especially during his stay in Italy, which was made too late in life to be of much service in the direction in which his art most needed strengthening, he never overcame certain difficulties, the complete mastery of which is necessary before those secure foundations can be laid upon which the greatest art must always be built. He probably painted more bad pictures than either of his two great rivals; and this was due partly to the unusual number of his sitters, which obliged him at times to hurry over his work, and to practise a hasty and summary handling which was apt to become careless and conventional; and in part because, as a rule, he depended upon his subject for inspiration and not upon himself; and, not infrequently, his fashionable clients were

singularly uninspiring. In this way he is less fitted to stand the test of an exhibition devoted entirely to his own work than Reynolds, or even Gainsborough with all his inequalities. In such a collection as that brought together in 1900 at the Grafton Gallery, an exhibition which contained both a number of his masterpieces and many very inferior examples, his faults were, perhaps, more evident than his great qualities. This exhibition made it clear that his breadth on occasion was apt to degenerate into mere emptiness, that his colour was often flat, thin, and poor, and his flesh tones hot; that his manipulation was at times loose and careless, and his knowledge of form faulty; while he repeated his motives so often, and placed his sitter in the same attitudes so frequently, that in a collection of some hundreds of his canvases his frequent poverty of imagination and lack of invention in composition becomes too insistent. In this latter direction, indeed, he displays little of the variety of his two great contemporaries.

If, however, these less successful efforts are put on one side, and attention is concentrated upon his finest works—and he accomplished many of them in his time—all his faults are forgotten or forgiven in the contemplation of the many high qualities which render his art so fascinating.

He was, in his own way, one of the most original of artists, and the technical methods he adopted were very largely the result of personal experiments which he found best suited his purpose, while his ideals were always noble and lofty ones, and his continual aim was so to improve himself in his art that he might embody them on canvas at least adequately.

He was one of the most poetical painters his century produced, a dreamer of dreams, a man haunted by visions of beauty which he never ceased to struggle to express, sometimes with complete success, and sometimes failing to realise in paint what was pictured so vividly in his brain. 'He had the gift of seizing and fixing on his canvas that strange evanescent spirit of female beauty, that *Fata Morgana* of painting, which greater artists than Romney have seen, but failed to secure,' as Mr. Lionel Cust notes. This search after the complete expression of beauty he often carried to excess, so that the result becomes mere prettiness, and cloys from its very sweetness, as in some of the pictures which made Greuze so popular an artist in his day; but often, too, when the inspiration compelled him to the utmost of his powers, he saw beyond and below the mere surface loveliness and

reached that higher beauty of character which, half-hidden to the unobservant behind the facial mask, yet shines through the eyes, illuminating and vivifying the beauty of the features by its revelation of the human soul behind them. In such canvases as these he reaches more than once almost the highest pinnacle of artistic success, as in the wonderful portrait of Mrs. Lee Acton, which is not only irradiated with a beauty which is irresistibly charming, but possesses dignity and simplicity as well.

In 'Serena Reading,' the same result is obtained. Simplicity and dignity were the two qualities for which Romney always consciously strove, and the 'Serena' is an example of how enchanting an effect he could produce by them. This little picture embodies with great completeness all that was the best in Romney's art, possessing both grace and ease in its arrangement and the flow of its simple lines, an assured handling in the painting of the white dress, and an exquisite sympathy in its appreciation of the modesty and purity of youth, the whole effect intensified by that strain of imaginative poetry which possessed Romney, though it rarely found perfect expression in his works, except in certain of his portraits of children.

To the school of poetry and sentiment—which sometimes degenerated into the merely sentimental—Romney belonged, and in him it found, if not its highest, yet a very pure and lofty expression; the school which included, in their very different degrees, such artists as Flaxman, William Blake, Thomas Stothard, Fuseli, and the whole body of sentimentalists from Angelica Kauffmann downwards. The close and constant study which Romney gave to Greek and Roman sculpture, not only during the two years of his residence in Rome, but for the remainder of his life in London, where he filled his studio with casts from many famous masterpieces, had a natural and very marked effect upon his painting, not only in the composition of his subjects and the arrangement and handling of his draperies, but also at times in the painting of the face itself, so that the effect he produced was often more sculpturesque than pictorial. In many of his clear-cut profile portraits the inspiration of some Greek gem or cameo is suggested, and was, no doubt, often the actual source of the arrangement of the picture.

It was the constant study of these remains of the great art of a past age, for which he professed so boundless an admiration, that caused him to strive for similar qualities in his own painting, and produced that simplicity of method, purity of outline, and nobility of

effect which became his highest ideals. It is owing to such qualities as these that Romney's designs have so much in common with those of his younger contemporary and friend, John Flaxman. His imagination was less vivid and much more fickle and superficial than that of William Blake, and his visions had not the wide range, the depth, and the loftiness which gave reality to the dreams of that extraordinary genius; but the two men were of the same school, more particularly in the methods of expression they employed to embody their thoughts in concrete form. In many of Romney's charcoal and other unfinished studies the design frequently suggests Blake, while in the 'Tempest' picture the small forms of Ariel and other sprites and fairies riding on the clouds at once recall similar graceful figures in Blake's mystic books.

The school to which Romney belonged, emotional and poetic in its aspirations, was in marked contrast to that of Sir Joshua and his followers, which was based upon more complex theories and a closer study of the great painting of the past, wider in its range, and far more versed in the subtleties of light and shade and of colour, and seeking a more complete realisation of nature. Romney's art, on the other hand, displays far less realism, and has a singularly decorative effect, and he obtained his results in the modelling of his flesh, more by delicacy in the gradation of tints than by elaborate devices of chiaroscuro.

In the management and rendering of his draperies, to which attention has been already called, he was often extremely happy, and in this respect he was not surpassed, and, indeed, rarely equalled, by any one of his contemporaries. Something of this he owed to his study of antique sculptures, but much came from his habit of painting the whole of his pictures himself. Though he had a pupil or assistant from time to time, it was seldom he allowed them to put brush to one of his own canvases. He finished everything himself, and never called in the drapery-painter to his assistance, as was the constant habit of many artists of his day. This method, though by reason of it many of his portraits remained unfinished in his studio for a number of years before they were finally delivered to his clients, had the advantage of giving unity to his work, and a greater beauty and truth in all the accessories of dress than is to be found in the portraits of more than one eighteenth-century painter of reputation. There is nothing extravagant or voluptuous in them, and little of the flutter and abandon in which Gainsborough delighted, but, instead, a graceful and flowing line, with a few large folds falling in beautiful curves, which look as though they had been taken almost directly from the antique. Their

beauty, indeed, was the beauty of great simplicity, and in this way they made a strong appeal to a sculptor like Flaxman, whose ideal was one of classic severity. It was only when he attempted a more hasty summary of a lady's costume, something in the manner of which Gainsborough was a master, that Romney failed. In these attempts, dashed in with a few bold strokes, which in themselves have little or no beauty, he in no way approaches the light and feathery touches of the other, who, even in his most rapid and apparently careless summary of such things as a frill of lace or the ripple of a knot of ribbon, rarely failed to obtain with surprising skill the effects at which he aimed. Romney could only reach an equal success by more careful methods, and when he abandoned them the result was often one merely of careless incompleteness.

He was so popular a painter in his day that he helped, no doubt, to bring about that simpler fashion in costumes which was beginning to be adopted towards the close of the eighteenth century. He rebelled against the exaggerations and absurdities of society both in its costumes and its method of dressing the hair, and whenever he could do so he induced his fair sitters to be painted in garments of his own devising, and with the hair curling naturally on each side of the neck. On his journey through Italy he was not only delighted with the dances but also with the dresses of the country women he saw in the streets. In particular, he approved of their habit of wearing no stays, which, as already noted, he considered 'gave a lightness and flexibility to their bodies and limbs, and a variety and grace to their action, which were exceedingly pleasing.' With his acute sense of grace both in line and movement he was naturally severe in his condemnation of the stiff, long-waisted armour in which the fashionable dames who came to his studio were buckled, and, whenever he could prevail upon them to make the sacrifice, he discarded it.

This search after simplicity he carried still further in his choice of pure white, or some single, subdued colour, or even black, for the dress, only relieved by a brighter touch in hair-ribbon or waist-belt. Probably many of these ladies only sat to him for the head and hands, and, though consenting to be represented in a costume displaying much of the severity of ancient Greece, did not go to the length of actually putting on anything which betrayed so painful a departure from the fashion of the moment. The figure, therefore, he often painted from a lay-model draped in the style he considered to be the most pictorially fitting.

XXVII

IN all that he attempted outside portraiture, the limitations of his art become much more apparent. It was his lifelong ambition to make a name for himself as a painter of imaginative and historical subjects. In his letters to Hayley he speaks constantly of his desire to abandon what he called the drudgery of portrait-painting in order to devote his whole time and energy to the nobler pursuit of ideal art.

His courage almost always failed him, however, when it came to the point. His popularity as a portrait painter was so great, and the demands society made upon him for that purpose were so insistent, that he never summoned enough strength of mind to reduce the number of his sitters to any great extent until the state of his health obliged him to abandon so lucrative a source of income. Simple in his tastes, and modest in his methods of living, with his purse always at the service of friends and relations even in the days when he had difficulty in supplying his own wants, it cannot be said that his was an avaricious disposition; but he was obliged to think of the present needs and future comfort of his family, and he had at least one expensive hobby, his collection of fine casts and sculptures, while his building operations at Hampstead cost him large sums of money, so that he never had, at any given time, the courage to turn his back finally upon the only source of income which was both adequate and assured. It is difficult to blame him for this inability to relinquish the one form of his art which was in request; for it must be remembered that there was little demand from English painters among connoisseurs in his day for anything but portraits. Rich collectors went to the Continent for their pictures, and Italian and Dutch 'old masters' were all the rage, the attempts of Englishmen in such fields being little regarded. Few English historical painters had the success of Benjamin West, and he owed most of it to the patronage of royalty, in whose footsteps there is always a numerous crowd only too willing to follow. The landscape painters suffered equally from want of

patronage. Richard Wilson was in difficulties for the greater part of his life, and Gainsborough's studio and house-passages were crowded with his unsold landscapes, which nine out of every ten of his sitters never even glanced at in passing. Gainsborough resembled Romney in that he was in the habit of expressing, in language of some violence, his contempt for portrait-painting, and his desire to abandon it for a combination of landscape and music. His landscapes, however, almost unregarded in his day, except by his fellow-artists, have since then gained so full an appreciation that certain of his admirers place them on a higher level than his portraits. Not so has it been with Romney. If his reputation rested upon his imaginative canvases alone, his place in the roll of great painters would be much lower than the one most often given to him. Such of them as have survived are seldom regarded with much enthusiasm by modern critics, who have good reasons for their opinion.

His brain was always filled with visions of the great pictures it was his purpose to paint. His imagination was easily stimulated, so that whatever book he happened to take up produced a crowd of pictorial ideas which he burned to set upon canvas without delay. In this way, Shakespeare and Milton were perpetual sources of inspiration to him; and he was always delighted to receive ideas for pictures from Hayley and other friends which their reading had suggested to them.

Unhappily his imagination, untrained and so under no restraint, though so quickly set on fire, was apt to die away with equal rapidity, and the great picture upon which he had started with such determination and high enthusiasm was in almost every case sooner or later put on one side, either half finished or only just begun. Fickleness of inspiration was not the only cause of this failure to complete his work. Sometimes the difficulties of composition or draughtsmanship proved insuperable to one whose early training had been so inadequate, but whose ideals of art were so lofty that he would give nothing to the world that did not come up to his own high standard; at others, the absence of a suitable model just at the moment it was wanted was the cause; while not infrequently that which was rapidly becoming a mere task was pushed on one side to give place to a fresher vision, which seized him to the exclusion of all else, and to which he felt he must give immediate expression.

Want of time was the common excuse he made both to himself and to his friends for the stacks of unfinished canvases which gradually accumulated, and finally blocked up his house and studio; but had he

possessed the power of keeping his imagination at its first white heat, and the necessary knowledge which would have enabled him to carry out his ideas without undue and harassing labour or the fear of failure always before his eyes, this excuse of lack of opportunity would have been much less frequent. As a matter of fact he was never idle, but snatched at every chance of carrying forward some great undertaking. If a sitter failed him, he rejoiced in the opportunity it gave him of working upon some such picture, and many an hour that rightly should have been used for finishing portraits, which were apt to accumulate in much the same manner as his imaginative works, was spent in this way to little practical purpose. The hours of the evening, which should have been given up to recreation, were devoted to the making of charcoal designs by lamplight, to the serious injury of his health. There was rarely a concentrated or prolonged attempt, however, to complete a picture from such designs ; the very last idea that his brain had conceived, or that one of his friends had suggested to him, was the one to which he turned, and he was never happier than when covering a clean canvas with some fresh fancy, which he fondly hoped, and, at the time fully intended, would be carried eventually to artistic completion, and bring an increase to his reputation. It was, in its way, a manner of day-dreaming, such as marks the irresolute man, filling his brain with noble dreams and fair visions, which he is unable to translate into concrete form before their loveliness has faded—melodies that are sweeter because no mortal ear may hear them, and pictures that are more fair because no eye may see their glow of colour, and the beauty and delicacy of form in which the imagination clothes them.

No one, as this ' life ' has endeavoured to show, encouraged him more in these habits than his dear friend Hayley, who was constantly egging him on to attempt fresh masterpieces. During his annual holiday at Eartham every inducement was set before him to attempt some big work with which to astonish the world and amaze his rivals. His host, an omnivorous reader, was fertile in ideas for pictures, both from his own compositions and from the masterpieces of literature, and his ' caro pittore,' not strong enough to resist the atmosphere of adulation with which he was surrounded in this Sussex abode of the mediocre muse—where he was usually the one big artistic fish among the rhyming minnows—was always delighted to fall in with his plans, carrying with them as they did the subtle suggestion that he was the one artist eminently fitted to paint them.

Unlike Blake, Romney was satisfied that Hayley's pretensions to good taste and a critical appreciation of the fine arts were well founded, and he not only gladly availed himself of his ideas, but was constantly asking him for fresh ones.

In this way the 'Hermit of Eartham,' quite unwittingly, was a harmful companion to the artist, whose imagination was in urgent need of restraint rather than of constant excitement; and, though always solicitous for his 'beloved painter's' health, his methods of attaining that object were singularly infelicitous, so that the annual holiday, which should have been a period of complete rest if Romney were to recover from the effects of the overwork of the previous ten months, became instead a time when his brain and hand were more busily engaged than ever.

One of the chief consequences of this ever-increasing stock of studies for imaginative subjects was that Romney left but few finished works of this class behind him—few, that is to say, in comparison with the hundreds of his uncompleted designs; and even the best of these display the limitations of his art much more clearly than his portraits, in which such limitations are more easily disguised than in more ambitious pictures, where a wider knowledge of the principles underlying all good composition, and a surer power of draughtsmanship of the human figure are necessary before complete success can be attained. It was only when there was a special spur to his ambition, causing him to concentrate his efforts and to stiffen his determination, such as was supplied by Boydell with his scheme for a Shakespeare Gallery, or the presence of so compelling a beauty and so inspiring a model as his 'divine lady,' that he was able to carry such work through to an end, and then only after prolonged labour and many weary months of despondency and premonitions of failure.

There is much truth in Cunningham's opinion that 'More seems to have been wanting than patronage; I cannot help suspecting that the painter was deficient in that creative power which enables men of the highest rank of genius to body forth their groups in imagination, and *completely fix* them before the mind's eye, even as a living person sits for a portrait. He seems, at least, to have yielded too much to the impulse of the moment—he was ever ready to begin a new subject, but exceedingly loath to finish an old one; and we are left to lament that so many conceptions of a high order are left in the crude elements of the art.'

BOYS IN A BOAT DRIFTING OUT TO SEA

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

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CUPID AND PSYCHE

IN THE LIVERPOOL ROYAL INSTITUTION

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His earliest 'fancy' and historical compositions, several of which were taken from Sterne's great novel, have, in most cases, disappeared, so that it is impossible to speak with any certainty of their excellences or defects. The only one of the 'Shandean pieces' of which we have an available record is the 'Dr. Slop entering Mr. Shandy's Parlour,' indifferently engraved for Hayley's book, the qualities of which have been already pointed out. Other compositions of the period, and of his first years in London, such as two scenes from *King Lear*, 'Elfrida,' and 'The Death of General Wolfe'—which caused so much commotion when it was sent in 1763 to compete for the premiums offered by the Society of Arts—have been mentioned earlier in these pages. The present ownership of most of them cannot be traced. 'The Death of Wolfe' is no longer hanging on the walls of the Council Chamber in Calcutta, where Governor Verelst placed it; it has disappeared, and so far no record of its later history has been found. His unfinished picture of 'Samson and Delilah,' exhibited in 1764, has likewise vanished, and Romney himself destroyed his second big historical work, 'The Death of King Edmund,' for lack of a customer or of house-room in which to keep it. A third canvas of size, depicting the 'Murder of Rizzio,' which he began as soon as he had settled in London, must to-day be regarded as another of Romney's lost works. It is, therefore, impossible to judge of what he was capable outside portraiture before his art had reached its maturity.

The most important canvas of his middle age, the shipwreck scene from the *Tempest*, for Boydell's Gallery, which is now in the Mere Hall Museum at Bolton, occupied much of his time for several years and caused him infinite anxiety; and when it was finished it was by no means a complete success, in spite of the labour he had bestowed on it. It is clumsy and awkward in composition, the group of crowded figures in the boat on the left having no artistic relation to that of Prospero and Miranda on the other side of the picture. There is no coherency about the design as a whole, and the smaller figures of the mariners in their impossible ship appear just as near to the spectator as the magician and his daughter. These latter are disproportionately tall, a not infrequent failing with Romney in drawing the full-length figure. Certain passages of the composition have great beauty, notably the head of Miranda, drawn from Lady Hamilton. The company on board the ship display most exaggerated emotions of fear and despair, by means of which the painter strove

to picture Shakespeare's very words. The general lack of unity, however, is such that the picture does not entirely convince or please. It leaves one cold and unaffected by the fury of the tempest he has striven so hard to depict. (See Plate xv.)

John Romney points out one of the causes of failure in the composition of this large canvas. 'Before a Shakspeare Gallery was ever thought of,' he writes, 'except by himself (as I have already mentioned) Mr. Romney had begun a picture representing Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban; and in the background, a shipwreck. I have the original sketch now in my possession, and it is in every respect satisfactory as a composition; but after the scheme had been embraced by the Boydells, some officious individual suggested to Mr. Romney that this picture would not be regarded by the critics as an historical composition, as it consisted of only three figures not sufficiently combined. The consequence was, as might have been expected from a man of his diffident mind, that the canvass was diminished on the right so as to exclude Caliban, and enlarged on the left so as to allow the shipwreck to be advanced to the foreground. By this alteration he endeavoured to unite two principal actions, which were essentially distinct, though referring to one another—an anomaly in composition, which nothing could justify but the supposed supernatural agency of Prospero. The result was, that what he had intended to have effected with a little additional labour, proved to be a source of endless toil—a struggle with impossibilities; and he could have painted three historical pictures on any other subjects, in less time, and with less effort. It, however, contains in an eminent degree, all the other great essentials of an historical picture—spirited action, correct delineation, character, and expression. It is also rich in colouring, without being overcharged with gums and varnishes: and the general effect is imposing and grand.'

His 'Infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions'[1] is one of those fantastic dreams such as Fuseli loved to paint. Here, again, the exaggerated facial expressions destroy their own purpose, for it is impossible without the written word which accompanied it in Boydell's catalogue to affix the proper title to each of these contorted countenances, while the naked babe, who remains quite unmoved in the midst of this nightmare of the passions, is almost amusing in his stolidity.

John Romney compares this picture with Sir Joshua's 'Death of Cardinal Beaufort,' greatly, as might be expected, to the disadvantage

[1] See page 170.

of the latter, and claims for it much higher qualities, as one of the most poetical of his father's works, than it possesses. 'It bears a strong resemblance to Collins' *Ode to the Passions*, as a work of pure imagination; but as a work of art, it may be compared to the best of Correggio's pictures. What can be more tender and delicate in colouring, what more graceful and fascinating in design, than *Joy* and the *Baby Shakespeare*? What more sweet and lovely than the representation of *Virtuous Love*? In *chiaro'scuro*, and in the disposition of the figures, there is much also of the manner of Correggio. Ever since this picture was sold at the Shakspeare Gallery—and it was sold for a very inadequate sum, but to whom I do not know—I have regretted its loss. Unfortunately I was not there; but wherever it is, if it exist at all, I deem it well worth five hundred guineas. I wish it was in the National Gallery, the only proper repository for such a picture.'

'The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy'[1] is more successful, but even here the drawing is far from faultless and the arrangement lacks something of Romney's usual grace, though the infant with its serious air, receiving its first lesson on the pipe of poesy, is one of his most delightful studies of child life (see Plate XVII.). The 'Titania, Puck, and the Changeling,'[2] on the seashore, though ugly in arrangement and unsatisfactory as to the figure of Titania—said, like the 'Comedy,' to be a portrait of Lady Hamilton—is admirable in its expression of malicious fun, and in the natural attitude of the naked child lying on its back on the ground, with legs upstretched in the air.

His single-figure subjects in the classical vein, such as the 'Cassandra,' or the 'Circe,' which were almost always painted from the fair Emma, are little more than idealised portraits; and whenever he attempts in them the expression of strong emotion the result is often curiously ineffectual. There is a suggestion of insincerity and a somewhat theatrical posing which even the beauty of the figure and the skilful draughtsmanship fail to disguise—a suggestion which is much fainter, and often entirely absent, when he painted the same lady merely as Emma Hart in some joyous or contemplative mood. Neither of these pictures can be placed among his happiest renderings of Lady Hamilton; while the 'Alope,' which he has conceived in his best 'classical manner,' is little more than a pale and weak reflection of an incident of singular dramatic intensity. It is true that Alope clasps her infant to her, and that some slight alarm is expressed upon

[1] See page 170.

[2] See page 191.

her fair features, but in spite of the near approach of the lions, she makes no attempt to arise from her graceful, recumbent attitude.

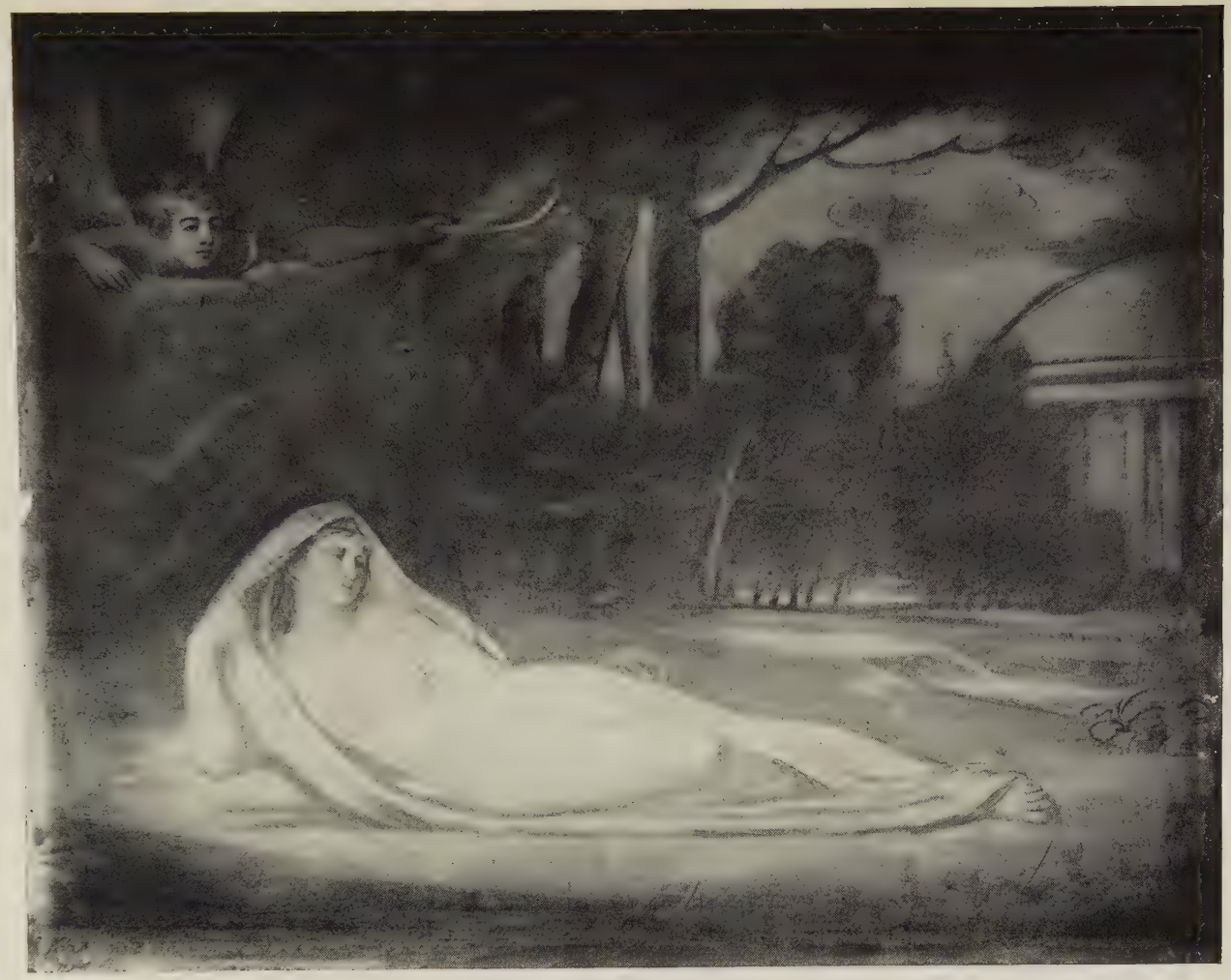
The few pictures he finished with subjects taken from actual history, such as 'Milton and his Daughters,' and 'Newton experimenting with the Prism,' though highly praised by his friends at the time of their painting, must be placed on the same level as his classical and Shakespearean works. It is not, perhaps, quite fair to criticise the 'Newton,' as towards the end of his life he strove, with failing brush, to alter one of the heads, an attempt attended by disastrous results; but, beyond a certain grace in some of the figures, and some fine passages of painting, they possess little or nothing to place them above similar work done by a number of his contemporaries, who in portraiture could not approach him.

It is different when his unfinished studies, sketches, and designs come under consideration. A great number of the more important of these are preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and in the Liverpool Royal Institution.

In many of them the very delicate play of his fancy finds delightful expression, and his pencil revels in the ideas suggested by his favourite poets and dramatists. As beginnings of pictures they are often full of poetic suggestion, and have a freedom and freshness of design which were apt to become weakened when an attempt was made to carry them further. The unfinished oil study, illustrated in this volume, of 'Children in a Boat,' drifting out to sea, while the terrified nurse or mother kneels helpless on the shore, is an exceptionally fine example both of his imaginative powers and his mastery in the rapid use of the brush. This study shows the tenderest feeling, and a breadth and spontaneity of handling in its rendering of the small nude figures, each one evidently studied from the model which served him for his infant Shakespeare; and in all probability it remained in its unfinished state on account of the death of the baby-model, of which mention is made in John Romney's memoir. (See Plate LXIII.)

There are two other and slighter studies for this unpainted picture at Cambridge which display an equal animation and freshness in the handling. In No. 83 the figure of the terrified nurse is even more expressive and dramatic than in Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne's version. Only three boys are shown in the boat, while in No. 84, a study in brown and black, there are five.

In any review of Romney's work as a designer, a prominent place must be given to the eighteen cartoons which were presented to the



CUPID AND PSYCHE

IN THE LIVERPOOL ROYAL INSTITUTION

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PSYCHE AND VENUS

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Liverpool Royal Institution in 1823 by the Rev. John Romney, through his friendship with its President, William Roscoe. These designs, which are still hanging in the rooms of the Society, where they can be seen by any one interested in Romney's art, are in black chalk, and have been carried to a high degree of finish by the painter, so that they may be regarded as complete in themselves, embodying all he wished to express almost as well as though he had added to them the final grace of colour. In them his skill in arrangement and his power of expression reach the highest manifestation of which he was capable, and nothing that he did afterwards, outside portraiture, approached them in purity of design, excellence and simplicity of composition, and good and careful draughtsmanship.

The greater number of them were produced during the first few years after his return from Italy, when the spell cast upon him by the great Italian masters, and of the sculptured art of the ancient Greeks, was still at its freshest and strongest. In these cartoons he embodied the best of what he had learnt from such sources before the fires of his inspiration began to burn low, and while his imagination still glowed with the recollection of them. He had come under their influence too late in life, perhaps, to enable him to realise his unceasing ambition of becoming a great historical painter, but not too late to learn from them something of the spirit which had inspired them, and to infuse into his own art at least a pale reflection of their glories.

The earliest of them in point of date are the seven[1] cartoons illustrating the tale of *Cupid and Psyche*, which, according to Hayley's narrative, were all designed in 1776. 'In the first years of my intimacy with Romney,' he says, 'we formed many social projects of uniting poetry and design, in works, that were never accomplished. Of some my recollection can discover no distinct vestiges; of others but a few trivial remains. I find however some verses, which remind me that we talked of producing a joint work on the adventures of Cupid and Psyche, from Apuleius. On this idea my friend drew no less than eight elegant cartoons in black chalk: I meant to finish a poem on the subject in emulation of Dryden's delightful fables, but if my memory does not deceive me, I speedily threw it aside for the sake of devoting my attention to a work, that I hoped to render more conducive to the professional honor of my friend—I mean my Epistles to Romney, written in 1777, and first printed in the following year.'

This quotation is only one of many similar ones in the 'Life' which

[1] The eighth is missing.

show Hayley, with none but the best of intentions and every desire to help his friend, in the guise of the foolish counsellor. If only, after inciting the imagination of the painter to such fine efforts as these cartoons bear witness, he had finished his own share of the work, and by means of example had kept Romney's fickle fancy enchained for a period long enough to produce something of adequate accomplishment in the way of a series of completed pictures, instead of turning to the manufacture of hundreds of dull and laborious verses in his praise, he would have served him to far better purpose.

Several of the 'Cupid and Psyche' designs are studies of a single figure. One of the most beautiful is the first (No. 153) in which Psyche is shown reclining at full length in a landscape, her left elbow resting on a block of stone, and the hand supporting her head, which is turned to the right, in profile. She is clad in flowing draperies, gracefully designed. The head of the gentle Zephyr, who has borne her to Cupid's enchanted kingdom, is seen across some reeds to the left, and the background is of trees, with dark clouds overhead. 'The mild breeze of the gently-blowing Zephyr played round her garments, fluttering and gradually expanding them till they lifted her up, and the god, wafting her with his tranquil breath adown the lofty mountain side, laid her softly on the flowery turf in the lap of the valley. Psyche, therefore, delightfully reclining in this pleasant and grassy spot, upon a bed of dewy herbage, felt her extreme agitation of mind allayed, and sank into a sweet sleep, from which she awoke refreshed in body, and with a mind more composed.' (See Plate LXIV.) In No. 154 she is shown in a very similar attitude, but facing to the right, leaning on her elbow, an almost nude figure, with slight transparent draperies and bosom bare. This thin veil covers her head, and is held away from her face with the right hand. Above a high wall of rough stone at her back Cupid's head and arms are seen. He is watching her, and from the expression of her face she is growing conscious of his invisible presence. On the left is Cupid's 'kingly palace.' 'She then espied a grove, thick planted with vast and lofty trees; she likewise saw a fountain in the middle of the grove, with water limpid as crystal. Near the fall of the fountain there was a kingly palace, not raised by human hands, but by divine skill.' This is one of Romney's most successful figure studies. (See Plate LXV.) In the next picture (No. 155) she is seated on the ground, her left elbow on a stone much in the same attitude as in No. 153, with her left hand pressed to her breast, and the other stretched out to touch the hand

of Cupid, who kneels at her feet, a nude figure with great wings. Both faces are in profile, Psyche looking down with an expression of shrinking modesty which is a little exaggerated.

In No. 156, Psyche, abandoned by Cupid as a result of her curiosity, is kneeling on the right before a small altar in Juno's temple, while before her, on the other side of the canvas, the goddess whose aid she is seeking appears in answer to her prayer, with arms outstretched, and covered from head to foot in long draperies. In the next, No. 157, Venus stands in the centre, a full-length nude figure, with her veil cast back and hanging from her arms, looking down scornfully at the unhappy Psyche who kneels at her feet, with downcast head, and hands held out in fear and supplication. On the left is shown a part of the goddess's chariot, with her doves upon it. In No. 158, Psyche is once more shown as a kneeling figure, clasping a small amphora in her arms, and looking up at the goddess, in flying draperies and bare breast, who is pointing with her right arm towards a mountain peak amid the clouds. Venus is about to despatch her upon the third of the difficult tasks she devised for her overthrow. '"Do you see the summit of yonder lofty mountain? From that peak fall the dusky waters of a black fountain, which, after being confined in the neighbouring valley, irrigate the Stygian marshes, and supply the hoarse streams of Cocytus? Bring me immediately in this little urn, ice-cold water drawn from the very midst of the lofty fountain." Thus speaking, she gave her a vessel of polished crystal, and at the same time threatened her more severely than before.' In this cartoon both heads have great sweetness of feature and charm of expression. (See Plate LXVI.) In the last of the series, which, again, is a very fine one, the unhappy maiden is shown passing through a wild and stormy landscape, with terror in her face, and bare feet and arms, holding clasped to her breast the small round box with which she is to penetrate to the depths of Hades, at the command of the angry goddess, and bring back within it some of Proserpine's beauty. '"Take this box," she said, delivering it to her, "and direct your course to the infernal regions and the deadly palace of Pluto. Then presenting the box to Proserpine, say, Venus requests you to send her a small portion of your beauty, at least as much as may be sufficient for one short day; for she has consumed all the beauty she possessed, through the attention which she pays to her sick son. But return with the utmost expedition; for I must adorn myself with this beauty of Proserpine, before I go to the theatre of the gods."'

There are several slight sketches for this series at Cambridge.

John Romney, in the list he prints of the cartoons he presented to the Royal Institution, speaks of eight on the subject of Cupid and Psyche and two of Orpheus and Eurydice, but this is not correct. There are only seven of the former, while there are three of the latter. He has mistaken the single-figure design of Eurydice fleeing from Aristaeus, the first on his list, for one of Psyche. The title is given correctly on the present frame of the cartoon. The mistake was a natural one, for Hayley speaks of 'eight elegant cartoons in black chalk.' The eighth design, which is now missing, was in all probability the study for the only one of the series which Romney carried out as a picture. As already related, after it had been nearly completed it was put aside, and lost for many years. When finally discovered among a heap of unfinished canvases, it was given to William Long, who himself added some drapery to it, to the indignation of John Romney, who accuses him of both pride and presumption. It is a graceful composition, displaying better drawing of the nude than Romney often accomplished. The two are seated side by side on a couch with a blue curtain behind. Cupid is almost nude, his face seen in profile, and his curling hair bound with a fillet. His left arm is round Psyche's waist, and his right, hanging down, holds his bow. Psyche, who is shown full face, with downcast eyes, is clothed in red from the waist to the feet (by Long). A burning lamp is upon the ground, and in a break in the clouds on the right the gods are seen seated in Olympus. It represents the last scene in the story, when the lovers are once more united. It is painted on a canvas 50 in. × 40 in., and was No. 167 in the Guildhall Exhibition, 1899, to which it was lent by Lieut.-Colonel Ellis. It was No. 12 in the sale of the Vaile Collection at Messrs. Christie's, on May 23rd, 1903, when it was purchased by Mr. Sedelmeyer for £210. At the Sedelmeyer sale in Paris, in May 1907, it fetched 5170 francs.

The three designs from the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, which are probably of almost the same date as those of Cupid and Psyche, also mark a high level of attainment on the part of Romney in imaginative composition.

The first, No. 150, represents Eurydice with bare feet and arms, her hair flying in the breeze, looking back over her shoulder, her hands held in front of her as though in fear, and a look of anguish on her face. She is fleeing from Aristaeus, the son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene, and father of Actaeon, who fell in love with her, and pursued her through the fields. She is crossing a small stream, by a plank almost

EURYDICE FLEEING FROM ARISTÆUS

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ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

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hidden in the thick growth of rushes, not seeing, in her terror of her pursuer, the great water-snake, lurking among the noisome weeds below. from whose bite she died. Dark trees and a stormy sky fill the background. (See Plate LXVII.) There is a rough, bold study for this cartoon in the Fitzwilliam Museum, reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland-Gower's book, to which he has given the incorrect title of 'Ophelia.'

The two remaining designs represent the failure of Orpheus to bring back his wife from Hades, through his eagerness to look upon her face before regaining the upper regions with the prize he had charmed from Pluto by the melody of his lyre. They are among the most successful of all, and display very tender feeling, and imaginative power of a high order. The first, No. 151, is an upright, in which Orpheus, on the left, clasps Eurydice in ineffectual arms. She is dragged away from him by her draperies, the violent action leaving her bare to the waist, and borne aloft by flying figures, her arms uplifted in a passion of grief. In the second design, No. 152, the lovers are at the mouth of the infernal regions. Eurydice, a most beautiful and graceful figure, again bare to the waist, is caught away amid clouds by the dimly seen forms of the Fates, the lower part of her body obscured by the darkness which is re-enfolding her. Her arms are stretched out in despair to Orpheus, another finely designed figure, nude but for a waist-cloth and some flying drapery. (See Plate LXVIII.) Three slight sketches for this subject are included among the Cambridge studies. Romney also began a picture of it in oils, which was destroyed at Hampstead.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice, as already stated, was suggested to Romney by Lord Thurlow when sitting for his portrait, who translated the passage from Virgil for his benefit, and added many comments of his own as to the way in which the picture should be painted. In the third cartoon at Liverpool Romney has followed as closely as possible the ideas suggested by the Lord Chancellor's annotations: 'The action of her figure is still speaking to Orpheus; engrossed with vehement love, and the agony of hopeless grief; and vainly stretching forth her hands to him for relief and rescue; but the heaviness of death is on her eyelids; her eyes maintain that unfixed and uncertain regard, which the poet calls swimming; her lips scarcely open enough to convey her words; her almost pendulous arms and hands are, in part, assisted by the rolling of the clouds to offer themselves to her rescue; her head, which begins to sink on one side, by the same means seems to preserve the posture of addressing him; the rest of her nerveless

limbs, just lifted from the ground, appear to be governed and disposed by the torrent of the cloud, which is bearing her off.'

The next four cartoons were inspired by the English translations of Æschylus and Euripides made by his friend Dr Potter, rector of Scarning. Romney read these in manuscript as well as after publication, and, says his son, 'he was so forcibly impressed by the boldness and sublimity of the subjects selected by that early dramatist (Æschylus), and by the simple, but vigorous manner in which they were treated, that he called him the *painter's poet*, and ranked him next to Shakspeare as a powerful delineator of the stronger passions.' These designs were composed during 1780 and 1781. The 'Prometheus,' No. 160, is the least important example in the Liverpool collection, and is not carried so nearly to completion as the others.

No. 161, 'Atossa's Dream,' represents the night-vision which came to Atossa, the wife of Darius, king of the Persians, foreshadowing the defeat of her son Xerxes and his army by the Greeks. The moment selected by the artist is that in which Xerxes harnesses to his chariot the two women at variance with each other, representing the Roman Greeks and the Asiatic Ionians, one of whom bends willingly to the yoke, while the other rebels, and overturns the chariot, by the side of which Xerxes is shown, a nude figure, prostrate on the ground. Both women are scantily clad, with flying draperies about them, one standing with her hands upon the car, and the other, with her back to the spectator, gazing up at the ghost of Darius, who comes in pity of his son, seen dimly through the black clouds above. John Romney points out that in this cartoon his father's love of simplicity has 'betrayed him into an impropriety. Asia, instead of being arrayed in gorgeous apparel, is attired like her companion Graecia. Simplicity, however, is a charm that a painter should never lose sight of; grace can hardly subsist without it.' (See Plate LXIX.)

In No. 162, 'The Ghost of Darius,' the spectre of the aged king, crowned, with long white beard, and head and shoulders covered with heavy garments, and arms outstretched, is seen through the smoke rising from a small altar. On the left are the prostrate figures of three of the Persain elders, whose groans and entreaties in this hour of their country's dire necessity have called up this vision of their dead king from his sepulchre. On the other side Atossa stands, with hands stretched in front of her, gazing with terror at the sight.

Flaxman's opinions as to the merit of Romney's historical compositions are quoted in a later chapter. He looked upon these cartoons as

'examples of the sublime and terrible,' and with regard to the two just described he says: 'The dream of Atossa, from the Persians of Æschylus, contrasted the death-like sleep of the Queen, with the Bacchanalian Fury of the Genius of Greece. The composition was conducted with the fire and severity of a Greek bas-relief: the ghost of Darius, with the Persians prostrated before him, awed the spectator by grandeur and mystery.'

The figure of 'Medea,' No 163, is a little theatrical, and the expression of the face, in the painter's attempt to display strong and conflicting emotions, is exaggerated. She is seated, with a dagger in her hand, looking intently at the two children she is about to kill, who are playing together quite unconscious of their coming fate, or of the two snakes which are to be seen above them on the rocks. This design does not reach to that sublimity and grandeur which the painter's son discovered in it. 'Subjects of the sublime,' he writes, 'in which the powerful passions are represented, were, I think, the most congenial to Mr. Romney's mind. He had a perfect knowledge of the effects which the violent emotions of the mind produce upon the features of the face, and the action of the body; so that he could impart to the eye a language almost as expressive as that of the tongue, and communicate to the muscles and limbs all that appropriate action which they assume according to the impulses of the different passions; he could represent with exact discrimination the shades by which kindred affections differ from each other, and even depict that agony of distress, when conflicting passions lacerate the tenderest feelings of the heart—which is the highest effort of skill—the *acme* of pictorial expression: and his designs, representing the struggle between disappointed love and maternal affection in the bosom of Medea, so beautifully described in the epigram on the picture painted by Timomachus—are convincing proof of his ability in this respect. In short, if there was any part of his art in which he more especially excelled, it was in expression, which is the soul of painting. The figure of Atossa, in the design of *Darius's Ghost* above mentioned, is alone sufficient to illustrate and confirm my observations. It is impossible to express more in so few strokes; they are full of mind and soul. Fear has deprived the muscles of their firmness, and her knees seem to tremble beneath her. "'The joints of *her* loins were loosed, and *her* knees smote one against another."' There are four slighter variations of the 'Medea' in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

The three Shakespearean designs are, in all probability, a few years

later in date, about 1786 or 1787, when Romney had begun to work upon his large 'Tempest' picture, and was planning many other subjects taken from the poet for Boydell's great venture. John Romney gives 1791 as about the date of the completion of 'The Infant Shakespeare nursed by Tragedy and Comedy,' and 'The Infant Shakespeare attended by Nature and the Passions,' but various designs were made for them some years earlier. No. 164, 'The Birth of Shakespeare,' which is a first idea for the last-named picture, is an upright, in the centre of which the infant is asleep in a round basket or cradle. Behind him stands Nature uplifting the great cloak which veils her, with much the same action as in the finished picture engraved by Benjamin Smith. On the left, a kneeling girl bare to the waist, probably representing Comedy, is lifting the veil from the child, while on the right Tragedy stands holding up a small dish, with her draperies falling away from her left shoulder. No. 165, 'The Infant Shakespeare,' is a version of the 'Nursing' picture, engraved by Caroline Watson for Hayley's book, which now belongs to Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne. In the Liverpool cartoon Comedy is reclining on the right with her arms round the child's waist, smiling down upon him. Tragedy, kneeling on the left, leans over him and clasps his right hand with both of hers, while he looks up at her with a laughing face. He rests in a similar basket-cradle to the one in which he is placed in the other design. (See Plate LXX.) There is a bold, unfinished study at Cambridge, reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland-Gower's book, which is evidently the first idea for the Liverpool cartoon, the design of which was again altered considerably in the finished picture. There is also at Cambridge a study for the 'Nature Unveiling.'

The latter subject was suggested to Romney by the following lines, referring to Shakespeare, in Gray's Pindaric ode, 'The Progress of Poesy':—

> 'Far from the sun and summer-gale
> In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
> What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
> To him the mighty Mother did unveil
> Her awful face: The dauntless Child
> Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smil'd.
> This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear
> Richly paint the vernal year:
> Thine too, these golden keys, immortal Boy!
> This can unlock the gates of Joy!
> Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
> Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.'

THE INFANT SHAKESPEARE NURSED BY COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

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ATOSSA'S DREAM

It is to the picture he began to paint from this subject which, left unfinished, perished amid the wreck of his works at Hampstead, that Miss Helen Maria Williams referred in the lines :—

> 'And Romney's graceful pencil flow,
> That nature's look benign pourtrays,
> When to her infant Shakspeare's gaze
> The partial nymph "unveil'd her awful face,"
> And bade "his colours clear" her features trace.'

In No. 166, 'The Death of Cordelia,' Romney has treated the theme with a severe simplicity which recalls more than one of William Blake's drawings. Cordelia is lying, a long thin figure, on a flat bed devoid of all draperies. Six figures are grouped around her, with bowed heads, and attitudes expressive of deep grief, the two at the head and the foot of the bier with faces concealed in their hands. John Romney's high opinion of his father's skill in heroic and ideal painting has been already quoted. He singles out this design from *King Lear* for special commendation. 'He knew how to unite Grecian grace with Etruscan simplicity. The small cartoon, representing the *Death of Cordelia*, is a beautiful specimen of this kind of composition ; the weeping mutes are exquisite.'

The last cartoon, No. 167, 'The Descent of Odin,' is a subject taken from Gray's poem of the same title. Odin, who has ridden down the 'yawning steep' to the very gate of hell, upon his coal-black war-horse, Sleipnir, to seek news of the future fate of his son Balder, who had dreamed he was soon to die, is represented at the moment when his incantations have called up a veiled prophetess from her tomb. She rises slowly from out the blackness of a pit in the right-hand corner of the canvas, only her head, which is bound with a white cloth passed under the chin, and shoulders being visible. The remainder of the picture is filled with the figure of Odin on his huge prancing horse. He wears a crown, and carries a spear and shield. His legs are bare from the knee downwards, and his right arm is stretched over the chasm, while a look of fear crosses his face.

'Some of these designs,' says Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, 'are full of splendid audacity and poetic feeling. The few which were carried out in oils on canvas by Romney prove him to have been one of the most imaginative of our painters apart from his profession of portrait-painting. In the designs taken from classic lore, one is reminded of Fuseli's and Blake's weird creations ; and where his favourites, Milton and Shakespeare, have inspired him, he shows a rare power

of rendering the creatures of the poets' brains, with the simplest of vehicles—a few strokes of the pencil, or of the pen dipped in Indian ink.'

The collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, which was presented by the Rev. John Romney in 1817, consists of about one hundred and sixty designs and studies, many of them very slight, and none of them carried as far towards completion as the larger ones in Liverpool. They are all, however, of the greatest interest to the student of Romney's art. Some twenty of them are reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's *Life*. Many of them are merely his first rough jottings of suggestions for subjects taken from Shakespeare or the classics, which he abandoned almost as soon as the pencil had left the paper; there are few of these, with the exception of the 'Tempest' studies, and one or two others, such as the slight sketch for 'Alope,' which were afterwards carried out as pictures.

The portrait-studies are still fewer in number, which is not surprising, as he rarely made preliminary pencil sketches of his sitters. The best of these is the spirited drawing for 'Lady Hamilton at the Spinning-Wheel,' reproduced in Lord Ronald Gower's book, and there is also a hastily dashed-in trial sketch for the grouping of the 'Dancing Stafford Children.' No. 116 is a fine study for a portrait-group of a mother and two children. The lady is seated on the right, spinning, with the younger girl leaning with her arms on her mother's lap. Both are looking towards the older child, on the left, who is standing with her arms folded on her breast, and holding a book or some similar object. Another very gracefully composed study in sepia, a portrait-group of a mother and child in a landscape, may be mentioned here, although it is not in the Cambridge collection, but belongs to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, who reproduces it in his book. The mother is seated under some trees, with her little one leaning against her side, and encircled with her right arm. The child is holding an open book, to which the mother is pointing with her disengaged hand. Two dogs are roughly indicated, one asleep, and the other looking up to attract the attention of its young companion.

The head of 'Satan' or the 'Fiend,' one of several heads for the unfinished picture from *Henry VI.* of 'Margery Jourdain and Bolingbroke conjuring up the Fiend,' is one of the most powerful of a number of studies of expression, in which the conception of evil is admirably indicated without unnecessary distortion or exaggeration of individual features. Even finer are several studies in black chalk for the head of

the Lapland Witch, a subject which Romney elaborated in a large cartoon. 'One of his designs from fancy,' says Hayley, 'drawn soon after his return from the Continent, and giving a very high idea of his creative powers, was a cartoon of black chalk, representing a Lapland witch surveying the sea from a rock, and enjoying the distress of mariners from a tempest of her own creation. Meyer used to contemplate this figure with the highest delight, admiring the felicity of the artist in preserving the beauty of fine female features, and in rendering the expression of the countenance sublimely malignant.' In the same writer's *Epistles to Romney*, published in 1788, he mentions this cartoon in the following lines:—

> 'Round fancy's circle when thy pencil flies,
> With what terrific pomp thy spectres rise!
> What lust of mischief marks thy witch's form,
> While on the Lapland rock she swells the storm.'

Hayley had intended to have this cartoon engraved for the *Life*, but unfortunately it had been completely ruined in the confusion attendant upon Romney's removal to Hampstead, and the 'Shipwreck at the Cape of Good Hope,' engraved by William Blake, was inserted in its stead. A paragraph in one of Miss Seward's letters, written in 1788, suggests a probable source of Romney's inspiration for this picture. 'You remember the beautiful translation in the Spectator of the Lapland odes! I was once shewn a close translation of them, and copied it. There was much rich matter to work upon.'

The 'Sketch of a Shipwreck,' mentioned more than once in Blake's letters, quoted in an earlier chapter, has in design considerable affinity to the 'Tempest' picture. The original, which cannot now be traced, was an unfinished sketch in oil, which John Romney gave to the poet. It represented the heroic exploit at the Cape of Good Hope, recorded in the *Travels* of Thunberg, of a certain Woltemad, who plunged into a raging sea on his horse and rescued a number of people from a wreck, but was himself drowned in making a final attempt to bring others ashore. The subject, which appealed very strongly to Romney, was suggested to him by the Rev. James Clarke, the biographer of Lord Nelson.

In one of the subjects from *Macbeth*, No. 140, there is a fine design of the Queen, with arms outstretched. There are also a number of studies for the 'Tempest' picture. In some of them Prospero is seated in his cave with a book, and his right hand uplifted, while Miranda stands on one side distracted, with her hands to her head. In others

they stand in attitudes more closely resembling those in the finished work, while in one the crouching figure of Caliban is indicated. There is a fine suggestion of movement in a design, only hastily indicated, of a subject given by Hayley: 'Two elegant Girls chasing of a butterfly in a garden; the first, a girl about ten or eleven, is on the point of catching it; the elder, about seventeen, surprised and intercepted by her lover, a youth springing from a thicket. He clasps her round the waist as she endeavours to escape.' Several of the sketches suggested by Hayley's *Essay on Old Maids*—'a work which reflects no credit on its author,' according to John Romney—very closely follow the composition of 'Shakespeare nursed by Comedy and Tragedy.'

One of the largest series consists of eleven designs for a subject given by Richard Cumberland: 'A group of Bacchantes are assisting at the initiation of a Rustic Nymph. They assail her senses with wine, music and dance; she hesitates; and in the moment, betwixt the allurements of pleasure, and the scruples of bashfulness, accepts the Thyrsis in one hand, and seizes the goblet with the other. Triumph and revelry possess the whole group, and every attitude of gaiety, every luxuriancy of scenery enriches, and enflames the composition.' Other hasty studies for this composition are to be found in more than one of Romney's sketch-books, the whole indicating the difficulty he found in satisfying himself in one of the most complicated and elaborate groupings he ever planned out for a picture. He began to paint the picture itself on a large canvas, and had made considerable progress with it, but one day, when Captain Thomas Dalton was sitting to him for his portrait, he happened to catch sight of it, and made some broad jokes about it, which so agitated Romney, ever sensitive to ridicule, that he put the unfinished work away, and never touched it again. Two other designs, Nos. 75 and 76, representing some maidens consulting a fortune-teller, are very similar to the 'Initiation' studies. They are drawn with great freedom, and the group of figures is well arranged, while the action of the girl who is forcing a reluctant companion forward, and holding out her hand for her to the oracle, is a very graceful one, and happily contrasted with the more dramatic and exaggerated movement of the arms of the old fortune-teller herself.

One of the most powerful of all the Cambridge studies is the one depicting the 'Holy Spirit on the Face of the Waters,' which is evidently taken from the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis: 'And darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' Here again the motive is strongly

reminiscent of more than one of William Blake's designs. The Spirit, with outstretched arms, is shown flying over a vast expanse of tumbled waters. It is boldly washed in with the brush, and displays a deeper imaginative feeling than is to be found in many of Romney's designs. It is, undoubtedly, a study for the picture, already described, painted by Romney in Rome, called 'Providence brooding over Chaos,' of which, on account of its subject, John Romney so disapproved that he changed its title to that of 'Jupiter Pluvius' for the purposes of the Hampstead sale.

Only three of the Cambridge drawings give evidence that Romney possessed a sense of humour. These are taken from *King Henry IV.*, and are devoted to the adventures of Falstaff. No. 128, in which the fat knight is shown seated, at the moment when Doll Tearsheet is exclaiming 'Captain! thou abominable damned cheater!' is a fine pencil study, full of humorous character. According to John Romney, the head of Falstaff bears a resemblance to John Henderson, the actor.

Other studies, more particularly those from the nude, display the poverty of his drawing; but there are certain hasty sketches, the merest suggestions for pictures, such as 'The Last Judgment,' also at Cambridge, in which there is a clever arrangement of material, and much animation and sense of movement in the grouping of the numerous small figures. Taken as a whole, these studies and designs are of very real interest to the student of Romney's work, showing as they do how it was through no lack of inventive power, but rather from an inability to confine it within definite channels, that he was unable to realise his ambition of gaining a great reputation as a painter of a higher art than mere portraiture. The causes of such failure, as already pointed out, were partly inherent in his own character, and partly due to the lack of systematic study in a good school in his younger days.

XXVIII

TO sum up his art in a few words, it is by his portraiture that Romney must stand or fall, when the attempt is made to place him in his true position among the leaders of the English school of painting in the eighteenth century. In portraiture his art found its truest and most natural outlet; and, at its best, it was an art of singular charm and beauty, in certain of its features perhaps unequalled by any of his contemporaries.

When the addition of its good qualities comes to be made, it will be found that it falls short of the art both of Reynolds and of Gainsborough. Sir Joshua's range was much wider, as has been already pointed out, and his intellectual grasp of the character of his sitters was, as a rule, profounder and more subtle. His colour had a deeper, richer glow, and greater variety, founded upon a life-long study of the Italian masters. From a purely technical point of view Romney's colouring was much the sounder, for he confined himself within a narrow range, from which he very rarely departed, and he never ventured upon the use of colours unless he was assured of their durability. Reynolds, on the other hand, was a daring experimentalist, always seeking new methods by which he might gain still more lovely effects, however ephemeral, and careless as to the future if only he could give for the moment the fullest possible expression to his keen delight in the beauty of colour. In consequence, many of his canvases faded until they were mere ghosts of their first brilliancy, even more quickly than his sitters themselves lost the freshness of youth; whereas few of Romney's pictures have changed for the worse during the hundred years that have passed since his death.

In his management of single tints, and particularly in the way in which he dealt with large masses of white, Romney was singularly happy. His colour, cool, clear, and often cold, is, within its limits, most harmonious, and even in his least considered and most careless pictures it is rarely discordant. An instance of the successful way in which he could deal with a colour in itself unpleasant, is to be found

in the very ugly red of the large chair in Lord Burton's picture of 'Thomas Fane' against which the little white-frocked child is leaning —one of Romney's most successful and solidly painted pictures of childhood—which strikes no discordant note in the colour scheme. The dresses and robes of his ceremonial-portraits, simple and broad in treatment, have little of the richness and sumptuousness of hue and texture in which Reynolds delighted, and in some of his canvases of this class, more especially in those of men, the colour is flat and uninteresting. In his drawing of draperies, however, and particularly of those based upon a classical tradition, he reached a point of excellence in which he was unequalled in his day, and the decorative effect they produce is one of rare beauty. There is in them a breadth of design, a purity of colour, and a grace of line—veiling, as they do, yet not concealing, the beauty of the form beneath them—which, in spite of a lack of profound research, combine to produce that effect of grandeur and simplicity which he was always striving to reach. In their classical severity his draperies have little in common with those of Gainsborough. They do not suggest the momentarily arrested movement and vivacity of the figure which they clothe; they are not 'all a-flutter like a lady's fan'; there is nothing of Herrick's 'tempestuous petticoat' about them. His hand was rapid and dexterous enough when rendering them after his own convention, but in those portraits in which he seems to be attempting to catch something of the light and airy grace, and the swift and feathery touch of Gainsborough, he is the least successful.

In his full-length portraits he aimed at a statuesque effect more often than a suggestion of movement. If there is movement, it is a stately one, as in the fine 'Mrs. Verelst' descending the staircase; even in the group of the 'Stafford' children the dancing is rhythmic and almost as sedate as a Dance of the Hours or Vestal Maidens on a Greek bas-relief. In this quality his pictures differ greatly from those of his two rivals, in which there is often far greater animation and a franker expression of the vitality of the model, such as is seen with very happy effect in such portraits as the 'Duchess of Devonshire and her Baby' by Reynolds, or the 'Baccelli' of Gainsborough.

Less learned and intellectual than Reynolds, and less a man of the world than Gainsborough, he did not go so deeply below the surface as they did in order to lay bare those more subtle traits of character which the human countenance conceals from all but the most penetrating gaze. Certain qualities he discovered and realised with the

keenest sympathy: the freshness and ingenuousness of youth, the radiant loveliness of newly awakened womanhood, gracious and graceful as a flower upon its stem, as yet undisturbed by passions; and the dignity and seriousness of manhood. These he painted with rare felicity and appreciation, so that the charm of his best portraits is an abiding one.

Beauty, strongly felt and closely seen, and pictured with both simplicity and dignity, must always make a strong appeal, and the extraordinary sweetness and grace of many of Romney's portraits of elegant youths, fair maids, and innocent children, will only cease to please both lovers of painting and the less critical multitude when the canvases themselves have perished; and this almost irresistible charm will be most strongly felt in the presence of those lovely groups representing mother and child, in which Romney's art touched its highest point and found its most pure expression. Faults he may have had in abundance, faults both of character and of art, but few traces of the former are to be found in his painting, except in the mass of incomplete work he left behind him, while the latter pass almost unheeded in the presence of that vision of perfect beauty which he could conjure up at will for our constant admiration and delight.

MRS. THOMAS PEMBERTON

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. CHARLES J. WERTHEIMER

MRS. TICKELL

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. ALFRED DE ROTHSCHILD

XXIX

IT may be of interest to students of Romney's work if a few extracts are gathered together, in a concluding chapter, from the criticisms of the more important writers who have dealt with his art from the time of his death until the present day.

There are few contemporary records from which it is possible to learn in what esteem his fellow-painters held him as an artist. The only two of any importance were written by John Flaxman, R.A., and Thomas Phillips, R.A. The former prepared for Hayley's book a 'Sketch of Romney's Professional Character,' and the latter contributed an unsigned article on the painter to Abraham Rees' *The Cyclopædia, or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature,* published in 1819.

What Flaxman has to say about him is well worth attention, and a few sentences from his essay may be quoted here:—

'Modest in his opinion of his own talents, he practised no tricks or deception to obtain popularity, but as he loved his art fervently, he practised it honestly, with indefatigable study and application. The circumstances of his early life seemed wholly unpropitious to the study of painting. . . . If his memory was not much exercised in learning words at school, some of his other faculties were not idle. His contemplative mind was employed in observing carefully, inquiring minutely into, and reflecting continually on the objects around him, and thus by comparing and adding the results of his own observation, with the little he was taught, he gained perhaps as much useful knowledge as is commonly acquired, in the ordinary way, with greater assistance from books and masters. . . . When he first began to paint, he had seen no gallery of pictures, nor the fine productions of ancient sculpture; but men, women and children were his statues, and all objects under the cope of heaven formed his school of painting. The rainbow, the purple distance, or the silver lake, taught him colouring; the various actions and passions of the human figure, with the forms of clouds, woods, mountains or valleys afforded him studies of composi-

tion. Indeed his genius bore a strong resemblance to the scenes he was born in; like them it partook of the grand and beautiful; and like them also, the bright sunshine and enchanting prospects of his fancy, were occasionally overspread with mist and gloom.'

After touching upon the improvement of his art resulting from his visit to Italy, he goes on to say: 'After his return the novelty and sentiment of his original subjects were universally admired. Most of these were of the delicate class, and each had its peculiar character. . . . Few painters have left so many examples in their work of the tender and delicate affections, and several of his pictures breathe a kindred spirit with the Sigismonda of Corregio. His cartoons, some of which have unfortunately perished, were examples of the sublime and terrible, at that time perfectly new in English art. . . . As Romney was gifted with peculiar powers for historical and ideal painting, so his heart and soul were engaged in the pursuit of it, whenever he could extricate himself from the importunate business of portrait painting. . . . He endeavoured to combine all the possible advantages of the subject immediately before him, and to exclude whatever had a tendency to weaken it. His compositions, like those of the ancient pictures, and basso relievos, told their story by a single group of figures in the front, whilst the back ground is made the simplest possible, rejecting all unnecessary episode, and trivial ornament, either of secondary groups or architectural subdivision. In his compositions the beholder was forcibly struck by the sentiment at the first glance, the gradations and varieties of which he traced through several characters, all conceived in an elevated spirit of dignity and beauty, with a lively expression of nature in all the parts. His heads were various: the male were decided and grand; the female lovely: his figures resembled the antique; the limbs were elegant, and finely formed; his drapery was well understood, either forming the figure into a mass with one or two deep folds only, or by its adhesion and transparency discovering the form of the figure, the lines of which were finely varied, with the union or expansion of spiral or cascade folds, composing with, or contrasting the outline and chiaro oscuro: he was so passionately fond of Grecian sculpture, that he had filled his study and galleries with fine casts from the most perfect statues, groups, basso relievos, and busts of antiquity.

'A peculiar shyness of disposition kept him from all association with public bodies, and led to the pursuit of his studies in retirement and solitude, which at the same time, that it encouraged habits of great temperance, allowed him the more leisure for observation, reflec-

tion, and trying his skill in other arts, connected with his own. And indeed few artists, since the fifteenth century, have been able to do so much in so many different branches; for besides his beautiful compositions and pictures, which have added to the knowledge and celebrity of the English school, he modelled like a sculptor, carved ornaments in wood with great delicacy, and could make an architectural design in a fine taste, as well as construct every part of the building.'

Following upon Flaxman's contribution to his book, Hayley prints a short eulogy from the pen of a painter whose name he withholds: 'The person who, of all his companions, may be said to have contemplated his works and his character through the greatest length of time, with increasing esteem and admiration.'

'I am satisfied,' says his anonymous friend, 'that whatever you may say of Romney, as a great artist, his works will justify in the fullest extent. If as an old artist myself, I may be permitted to judge the talents of so extraordinary a man, as our late beloved friend, I should not hesitate to say, that after his return from his studies abroad, he was not less qualified to excel in the highest walk of art, history, than for the profession of portraiture. . . . For luxuriance of invention, he may be classed with Rubens himself. There is one thing, that may still be added to his other excellencies. I mean the exceeding beauty of his draperies, both in his portraits and his historical compositions, which surpass every thing of the kind, that I have ever seen; they were all painted from models, and after he had finished adjusting them upon the layman, he always said he looked upon them as half done, so ready and certain was his execution, that it is but doing him common justice to say, that he stands unrivalled in this department of the art.' This praise of the beauty of Romney's treatment of draperies in his pictures has been ascribed frequently and erroneously to Flaxman, through a too careless reading of Hayley's volume.

Thomas Phillips, who makes use of parts of Flaxman's essay in his criticism, if less enthusiastic than the latter, who was a close and personal friend of the painter, and one who held in equal, or even greater, admiration the works of the old Greek sculptors, is perhaps a better, because a more impartial judge, less influenced by friendship to ignore faults which must be taken into consideration if a just appreciation of Romney's art is to be reached. 'Of Romney as an artist,' he writes, 'it is by no means easy to appreciate the just character. That he possessed genius and talents in an eminent degree, no one can deny. The

learned editor of Pilkington's Dictionary has said, "that he was made for the times, and the times for him." It had perhaps been more just to have observed, that Romney was made for better times than those in which he lived. His perception of art was far purer than most of his contemporaries, at least in this country, were capable of enjoying; and it must be remembered, that no one ever set forth in the career of an artist under greater disadvantages than he did. The taste he imbibed for simplicity and grandeur, on seeing, at an advanced period of his life, the works of the ancient artists, prove what might have been fairly expected of him, had he happily been born under more favourable circumstances; and early initiated, under good instructors, in the mysteries of the art he cultivated with so much success without those aids.

'The pursuit of painting, however, requires a knowledge of certain rules in the arrangement of lines; of the beauty and power of contrast in light and shade, and in form and colour; as well as of the speediest and most efficient modes of execution. This science, being the result of repeated observations upon the principles by which Nature produces her most agreeable and sublime effects, is most readily obtained, by a careful inspection of good works of art wherein it is exemplified. Such advantage was not Romney's. He had to separate for himself the partial, from the general effects of Nature; and the inequality with which he, in this point, met the rivalry of more fortunate artists, is too evident in most of his productions. Frequently, his chiaroscuro is ill-conducted, and his harmony of forms and colours imperfect; even in pictures produced when enjoying the height of his intellectual power, and at the happiest period of his executive skill: at the same time they exhibit great fertility of invention, with sweetness and delicacy of sentiment.

'His journey to Italy expanded his view of art: new scenes, and new sources of information, were presented to him, of which he did not neglect to avail himself. The works of fancy he produced after his return home exemplify the use he made of the two years he spent among the unrivalled productions of art he there met with. The purity and perfection of ancient sculpture appear to have made the deepest impression upon his mind: and he afterwards assiduously cherished the taste he then imbibed. . . . Hence, grandeur and simplicity became the principal objects of his ambition; he perceived these qualities distinctly, and employed them judiciously; even whilst imitating Nature in his most usual occupation,—portrait-painting. To

present his figure, or tell his story, with simple undisturbed effect, rejecting all unnecessary minutiæ, was the point he aimed at and obtained.

'He was in general fortunate in the choice of his historical subjects; and certainly, in this respect, had far the advantage of his great rival, Sir Joshua Reynolds: and no less so in the power of expression, which he scarcely ever failed to obtain: whilst the latter, in his historical pictures, has rarely been so happy. Reynolds gave beauty and grace to his figures: Romney imparted soul. The former delights the eye with the harmony and richness of colour, and beauty of effect; the latter thrills and gratifies the heart with truth and force of expression, in action and countenance; wrought with more simplicity, but with less art.

'In portraiture, however, the justly exalted president of the Royal Academy stood alone, and Romney was not able to cope with him. In the composition of his figures, our artist exhibited the taste he had acquired by the study of the antique; and he admirably varied the characters of his heads. The arrangement of drapery which he adopted, partook largely of the same style; and being well understood, was painted with great dexterity; though it must be confessed, that in form, it was not unfrequently better adapted to sculpture than to painting. His style of colouring was simple and broad. In that of his flesh he was very successful; exhibiting a great variety of complexion, with much warmth and richness. It was not always, however, that his pictures were complete in the general tone; but crude discordant colours were sometimes introduced in the backgrounds, which not being blended or broken into unison with the hue of the principal figures, interrupted the harmony of the whole. The executive part of his works was free, learned, and precise, without being trifling or minute, possessing great simplicity, and exhibiting a purity of feeling consonant with the style of his compositions. He aimed at the best of all principles in the imitation of nature, *viz.* to generalize its effects; he even carried it so far as to subject himself to the charge of negligence in the completion of his forms: but the truth of his imitation is sufficiently perfect to satisfy the minds of those who regard nature systematically, and not individually, or too minutely. In a word, every lover of art who knows how to appreciate truly what is most valuable in painting, will hold the name of Romney in increasing estimation, the more frequently and impartially he examines his productions.'

To these two appreciations of Romney's art may be added a few lines from Allan Cunningham, who says:—

'In the eulogium of Flaxman are read the sentiments of a fine judge; but we must, nevertheless, look upon it as the opinion of one more desirous to dwell on excellencies than to point out defects. It was a great merit in the sculptor's eyes that Romney was enthusiastic about the ideal in art—that he was in raptures with the antique, and aimed at severe simplicity in his compositions. His ideas were often, indeed, original and striking; but, in communicating them to the canvas, he exhibited not a little of the deficiency visible in the productions of the great sculptor himself, viz. a certain air of heaviness in form, and want of grace and delicacy in workmanship, which detract seriously from the merit of the conception.'

He adds, however, in speaking of his ideal and historical pieces, that 'some of them are equal, in loftiness of thought, and in simplicity of conception, to any productions of that class in the British school'; while with regard to his portraiture he is of opinion that 'Romney missed, certainly, the grace and ease, and the fine flush of colouring, which have brought lasting fame to Reynolds; and he wanted, moreover, his illustrious rival's exquisite prudence in handling the costume of the day, so as to soften down its capes, and cuffs, and buttons. There appear, however, traces of great dignity and manliness in all his heads—and, in some, a certain touch of poetic loftiness, of which Reynolds has furnished hardly an example.'

Though John Romney's qualifications as a critic of art were no greater than those of any other cultured man of his time, and though his opinions were not unbiassed by filial affection, yet his summing up of his father's chief merits as a painter is not without interest even to-day, however lightly his artistic judgment is regarded by the modern scientific school.

'His *forte*,' he holds, 'was heroic, and imaginative painting, which if he had pursued, he might have painted in a prison. In his endeavours, however, to secure an independence as soon as possible in order that he might devote himself without restraint to the higher pursuits of his profession; he, unfortunately, destroyed his health by his intemperance of study; and thus prevented the object he had in view, by the very means through which he had intended to have promoted it—for when the period arrived in which all those great works which he had projected, were to have been

performed, he was become disabled by disease and the infirmities of a premature old age.'

'Notwithstanding Mr. Romney's ardent enthusiasm for heroic painting, he had a rich and elegant fancy, and a nice perception of the charms and graces of female beauty; particularly of that fascinating reserve, which results from innocence and virtue: he had, also, a correct feeling and knowledge of the unrestrained actions and playful antics of children; and by combining these respective impressions, he formed in his imagination those ideal beings, called *Fairies*, which have so frequently been employed as agents in poetic fictions.

'There are certain felicities both of conception and execution, in painting as well as in poetry, in which an artist may be said

'To catch a grace beyond the reach of art.'

That poetic fervour and almost magical influence, which directs both the pencil and the pen, and gives birth to those felicities, was powerfully felt by Mr. Romney. He had a just conception of the *beau ideal* which he had acquired by a diligent study of the antique while at Rome; so that even in his portraits he was able to combine ideal grace with the realities of nature. He could impart to his female figures that indescribable something—that *Je ne sai quoi* which captivates the spectator without his being able to account for it. He knew how to unite Grecian grace with Etruscan simplicity.'

'In the subordinate parts of a picture he generally excelled. He painted drapery with great facility and quickness; and, though it is often slight, it is always masterly. In his back-grounds he was not so happy, he seems to have painted with too much body in his colours, and with too full a brush; so that he sometimes missed those delicate touches which express distance. In this department of his art he was certainly inferior to Reynolds, whose backgrounds are often exquisite bits of landscape.

'In the colouring of Mr. Romney's portraits there is a purity, a clearness, and relief, which give them the appearance of reality. In representing the carnations of the female face his skill was pre-eminent. . . . He never sacrificed the durability of his colours in order to obtain by meretricious arts a temporary applause for rich and mellow tints. His style is clear, chaste, and unsophisticated; and he will obtain from time, what others have anticipated by trick. His pictures

which were painted sixty years ago, appear as fresh as if recently taken from the easel. As he never put his name upon his pictures, I fear that many of them may hereafter be transferred to Reynolds, especially when those by the latter are become evanescent; although there is in fact a very manifest difference between the styles of the two masters.'

'Mr. Romney has left numerous historical and fancy sketches which bear ample testimony to his genius. Many of them are conceived with much originality of idea, and have great force and power of expression. Others have exquisite pastoral grace and simplicity. Has Reynolds left any similar proofs of talent?'

Turning to more modern times, a few extracts from the writings of one or two of the leading art critics may be given.

Romney, according to Mr. Frederick Wedmore, was sensitive to a greater degree than Reynolds and Gainsborough to the pure grace of line, but was more frequently preoccupied with a refined lusciousness of womanly beauty only a little less meretricious than the beauty sought after by Greuze. 'His draperies are noticeable for exceeding beauty, but it is the beauty of great simplicity, and of a simplicity not painfully sought for, but quickly found. There is an admirable grace in the easy concord of these large folds. It had not been the aim of Gainsborough; it was beyond Reynolds; its inspiration was more from Greece than from Rome. The drapery was not gorgeous, but slender and severe, even in all the exquisiteness of its flow; its folds scanty rather than voluminous; it answered so to Flaxman's ideal, and his ideal was the highest. His art deals neither with the subtleties of intellectual character, nor with the tasks of minutely imitative painting, and in characterising it the first word to be used is *grace*, and almost the last is *grace*.'

'The grand style,' in Mr. Claude Phillips' opinion, 'was the aim that Romney, like so many of his contemporaries, had constantly before him; and though, luckily for English art, the tide of fashion in his favour as a portraitist was too strong to admit of the full development of his art in other directions, his tardy studies nevertheless left a lasting and, on the whole, a beneficial impression on his manner in portraiture—giving dignity and simplicity, as well as grace and charm, and enabling him to avoid the snare of affectation, into which even the greater of his contemporaries not infrequently fell. The classic simplicity of his designs was peculiarly suited to hit the popular taste in this last quarter of the eighteenth century,

during which the neo-classic was to attain a greater and still greater ascendency.'

Sir Martin Conway, speaking of the portrait of 'Miss Ramus,' says that it is a picture which may demand undisputed right of entry into any collection of great works of art. 'It possesses a classical quality rare in paintings of the eighteenth century. This lady would not be out of place in an assemblage of Roman beauties. Romney, in his best period, was very economical of details. He designed his figures on large lines and contented himself with a bold indication of masses and planes. He suggested modelling by the justness of his draughtsmanship rather than by minute indication of solid form. This method sometimes produces a sketchy effect. But in a figure such as this, where the pose is so noble, the massing of the parts so dignified and finely proportioned, the outlines so elegant and severe, the addition of detail would only have detracted from the breadth of the whole. The background is therefore of the simplest—no multiplicity of foliage, no forest glades, nothing but dark sky above, and the least possible indication of the earth below.'

The late Mr. F. G. Stephens, in an article in the *Magazine of Art* (1897, p. 67), contends that it is manifestly unfair to compare Reynolds with Romney. 'It seems to me that in one respect only is it possible to compare them, because in that way alone are they nearly on a level. As painters the technique of each was radically different from that of the other. For instance, Reynolds was decidedly a bad draughtsman, as a painter he was an experimentalist of the wildest kind, and abject in his consummate ignorance of that science of the pigments and vehicles which every Academy student of later generations is the master of. Romney's technical range was, on the other hand, of the narrowest, and it never varied, but it was perfectly safe; whereas more than one half of the illustrious President's pictures are such utter wrecks that, as in the case of Turner's works, it is superstition alone which sees what his devotees pretend they see. I have seen hundreds of fine Romneys, and never yet met with one which was not in good condition; most of them were, indeed, simply perfect. Of Romney as a colourist, my conviction is that his place in art-records ought to be very much higher than it is. As a painter of beauty, especially when the charms of women are concerned, it would be quite possible for Romney to hold his own against Reynolds. He was a grander as well as a graver designer than Reynolds, most of

whose designs are simply conventions deftly manifest in paint. There are a few noble exceptions to this opinion, but those exceptions are not the works of Sir Joshua which the popular taste has crowned. . . . To compare them on equal grounds one must bring the men face to face as painters of children. Here indeed may Romney's honours stand firm, so that the creator of "Mrs. Stables and her Daughters," "Mrs. Carwardine and Child," "The Stafford Family," and "The Countess of Warwick and her Son," is on a par with the master who gave us "Penelope Boothby," "Miss Bowles," "Collina," and "Master Crewe." It is strange, but it is true, that the childless Reynolds painted children with such art and exquisite sympathy as no other artist since his time, except Millais, had the good fortune to do. On the other hand, Romney—who had several children, but for many years saw little of them—is his worthy rival in this respect at least. Thus it appears that the proud, shy, and resentful Romney, hypochondriac and irritable being as he was, and the genial, courteous, patient, much-loving and much-loved man of the world, who faced him at every turn, were alike in their one great humanising love for children, and with almost equal happiness painted children in that which was the child-painting age *par excellence*.'

APPENDIX I

THE CHILDREN OF JOHN AND ANN ROMNEY

John Romney had eleven children:—

1. William, born 12th May 1731; died at Dominica, 11th September 1768.
2. Jane, born 18th October 1732.
3. George, born 15th December 1734; died 15th November 1802.
4. John, born 4th December 1736; died in London, 22nd April 1782, at 3 o'clock in the morning.
5. Lawrence, born 25th December 1737; died at Antigua, 6th September 1772, at 3 o'clock in the morning.
6. Thomas, born 26th January 1741, and was buried 31st May 1743.
7. Peter, born 1st June 1743; died at Stockport, in Cheshire, on Sunday, 11th May 1777, at 12 at noon.
8. James, born 3rd June 1745; died at Bath, October 1807.
9 and 10. Robert and Richard, twins, born 24th July 1747, and were buried soon after.
11. Thomas, the second of that name, born 4th November 1749; died in 1758.

William and Lawrence Romney received their business training in the house of Mr. Samuel Bradford, merchant, of Lancaster. According to a letter of Peter Romney's they both went out to the West Indies in 1762, though in a later letter, dated 1766, he speaks of Lawrence spending a day with him at Ulverston; the latter appears to have returned home for a year or two, and then to have gone out again. They were not very successful in business, and the unhealthy climate carried both of them off in early manhood, William dying six years after landing, and Lawrence four years later.

In a letter to his father, dated Antigua, 10th June 1772, Lawrence complains very bitterly of the neglect with which he is treated by his relations in England:—

'I have been here upwards of four years now and never have had the happiness of a line from you. It is true I have not wrote to you by every opportunity, but I have frequently wrote, some times by Lancaster, and some times by London. You certainly must have got some of my letters. . . . I do not stay here by choice, and to be neglected in such a manner makes me very unhappy. . . . So little do I know of my family that I dont even know in what part of the World to find them. . . . I dont doubt but I am censured about my Brothers affairs, I have been told it is

imagined he Died worth money, to my sorrow I find it otherwise, for of Late I find he owes money in Lancaster to a considerable amt. which I have order'd to be paid. If he was worth money he would hardly have left England in Debt. It is true there is money due to him to a considerable amnt. in the French Islands, but that will never be received except we should have a War, and those Islands fall into our hands again, then it is probable if the men be living, and able to pay, the Debts may be good, otherwise they will never be recd. I have some hopes of coming home the next year, if I can possibly I will, but it is very uncertain. I enjoy my health better here than I should do in England, and if I can make it worth my while to stay I have no motive for home but to see you, which I wish for very much. . . . I sometimes hear of my Brother George's performances in such a manner as gives me great pleasure, I suppose he is one of the first Painters in England. I hope in God he may enjoy his health to make a fortune.' Both the address and signature to this letter are spelt 'Rumney.'

Three months after writing this letter Lawrence Romney died, the news of his decease being despatched to the family at Dalton by Mr. Benjamin Sykes, who wrote on the 17th of September:—

'Your son Lawrence Rumney has been a very Intimate Particular Acquaintance of Mine for some Years past. He has always made Our House his Home (By Our House I mean Sykes and Sandfords). He had very little Business to do on his Own Acct. and Mr. Sandford agreed with Him as I Understand, for so much a Year to keep our Books &c. . . . On the 20th of last Month Your Son was Seized with a Fever and in all likelihood would have got the better of it as a Very Clever Doctor attended Him, had it not been for the Violent Hurricane that Happened on Monday the 31st of said Month. The Roof of the House He was in, was Blown down, and He was glad to get Out of it in Safety. Yet Still he was Exposed to the wind which tossed him about for several Hours, and the very heavy Rain that fell at the same time must have given him a Severe Cold for His Fever Return'd the next Day and never Quitted Him till (I am sorry to acquaint you) He Departed this Life on Sunday Morning the Sixt. Instant a little past three o'clock. I Buryed Him in a Genteel Frugal Manner and have as a friend, Administered to His Effects. . . . I am very Sorry for the Loss of My Friend as I believe He Dyed a Good Man.'

Two months later than this letter Mr. Samuel Bradford, of Lancaster, in reply to a communication from James Romney, wrote saying that 'reports that are circulated are not always authentick, but that of the Decease of thy Brother Lawrence is too true. I believe my Factors did lately imploy him in their Store as Bookkeeper; the following is a quotation from Sandford's letter, dated—

'"Dominica 15th Sepr. I have just recd. from Sykes at Antigua the Disagreable news of poor Rumney's decease, he was Interred last Sunday week, as worthy a young fellow as ever lived, I know not how he was circumstanc'd."

'The above is what I know of the matter, and I condole with the good Family on the Loss sustain'd, which must be Submited to.

'Thy Assured Friend

'Saml. Bradford.'

Jane, the second child, and only daughter, married one of the Barrows of

Ulverston, thus connecting the Romney family with that of the well-known Sir John Barrow.

The third son, John, two years younger than the artist, was a source of continual worry and anxiety to him. He lived in London for the last twenty years of his life, dying in 1782, and was constantly demanding monetary assistance from his now celebrated brother. In a long letter from Peter in Kendal, written to Romney a few months after he reached London in 1762, the latter half of which is printed in the Rev. John Romney's *Life*, the first part is full of fears for John's future, and of entreaties to George to do all in his power to save him from himself:—

'You desire hus not to trouble our selves Concerning Jackey, but Let him have his full swing. O heavens—God forbid this epithet should prove Real—and is it impossible—I think farr from it. Poverty the consequence of a long state of Indolence and Vice will never take to Industry for support. It will find easier ways to Reach its ends. Alas you sure doent know the principels of human nature May be vastly degraded and even utterly stifled by debauchery, or its Impossible you should trust to His Conscience in poverty. . . . I would have you by forse do something with him tho it be never so Rigerous and immediatly too. Hee'l Eternelly bless you for it, as you'l do your self and all that knows you, but if you neglect him and doent—perhaps curse you. . . . Nothing but his Release will hinder my father from visiting you.'

Peter himself, who was nineteen when he wrote this letter, was in his turn to cause his brother equal anxiety. If he had been stronger in character he might have made a name for himself as a painter. With but a scanty education he had considerable power of literary expression and a fondness for writing verses. 'He was well qualified to have coped with Cotes as a crayon-painter,' writes his nephew; 'but the true bias of his genius would have led him to cultivate the highest branch of the art—but, alas! he had neither patrons nor money for that purpose.' His face, as a young man, judging by Romney's portrait of him in the early group called 'A Conversation,' exhibited at the Free Society of Artists in 1766, was a good one, and his character was not unlike that of his more famous brother, with whom he studied from his sixteenth until his nineteenth year, from 1759 to 1762.

He remained in Kendal with his sister-in-law for about a year after Romney's departure for London, painting portraits for a guinea a head. His most important attempt was a large family group, representing George Romney and his wife in the centre of the picture, the artist in a fancy dress of white satin, with a dark coat, his hand resting on Mrs. Romney's shoulder. On the right Mrs. Abbot was seated, with her small granddaughter standing by her, while on the other side the youthful John Romney was drawing a man's head on a rock with chalk. The background represented wild scenery of rocks and waterfalls, according to the last-named, who says that—'The sudden death of the beautiful and interesting little girl, then just three years old, threw all into disorder and confusion; the picture was abandoned forever; the domestic establishment broken up, and its members separated. The picture was kept by Mrs. Romney's sister and given to me more than forty years ago. As it was not a producible picture on account of its unfinished state, I cut it up, and only kept the portrait of the venerable old lady, who was about eighty years old when

painted. I have it still, and appreciate it highly. . . . Her physiognomy is very pleasing, and handsome for a woman of her years. It is admirably coloured, and, considering all circumstances, an extraordinary production, sufficient to justify all the expectations that were then entertained of his future eminence.' The likeness of his brother he painted from memory, and partly from an unfinished crayon study which George Romney had left behind.

When Romney revisited the north in 1765, he took back Peter with him to London, but as the latter was unable to maintain himself, he was forced to return to Dalton. In 1766 he was for some time in Ulverston, lodging with Williamson, George's old companion, and corresponding with William Cockin, who proved himself so good a friend to more than one member of the Romney family. 'While he lodged at Williamson's,' we are told, 'an artful female, who visited there, by her affected simplicity of manners, and specious modesty, had the address to insinuate herself into his heart; and had nearly, like Circe of old, entangled him in her snares. As soon as her mask was taken off, and he became undeceived, he immediately quitted Ulverston; but she followed him to Lancaster and Manchester, and so annoyed him, that he was obliged to have recourse to a magistrate to have her removed. She afterwards assumed his name, pretended to be his wife, and under that character incurred much debt. Williamson was severely censured for giving countenance to the intercourse.'

Peter went to Lancaster early in 1767, and painted some portraits and a number of pictures which, imitating the earlier example of his brother, he disposed of by lottery, and then settled in Manchester on the proceeds. Here he remained for some years, with one short interval spent in Liverpool, gaining considerable reputation, and making some good friends among several of the literary and learned lights of the town. His nature was such that he was constantly in love, and he finally became deeply enamoured of a Miss Brierley. The sudden death of this young lady, from rapid consumption, plunged him into such despair that for a time his mind was unhinged, and in the summer of 1770 he left Manchester, and spent the next two months in wandering among the hills which separate Lancashire from Yorkshire, regardless of everything but his own misery. When his grief began to subside he settled in Bradford, where, through the kindness of a friend, he soon found plenty of occupation, and produced a number of portraits in crayons. Here, hoping, perhaps, to extinguish the recollection of his sorrow by a fresh flame, he began to pay attentions to his friend's sister-in-law, but being repulsed, again set forth as a disconsolate wanderer.

He neglected his art for a time, and became involved in debt and difficulties. Some time afterwards he settled in Ipswich, where, in spite of finding a number of sitters, he was, in 1774, arrested and thrown into prison by his frame-makers. From this he was eventually rescued by several of his patrons, with one of whom, Mr. Lambert, a professor of Greek at Cambridge, he removed to the latter place, where he was employed in drawing heads at three guineas apiece. Among those who sat to him were Lord John Clinton, Lord Pelham, Lord and Lady Montford, Colonel and Mrs. Wilson, of Dallam Tower, and Doctor and Mrs. Watson (Miss Wilson).

It was about this time that he began to indulge in drinking habits, to counteract the morbid melancholy that preyed upon his spirits, and once again he was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind him a number of debts. He went to London, and, in the beginning of 1777, his brother George having paid his liabilities, he was sent to Stockport, where he seemed to be making a fresh start, when a sudden attack of illness, which his shattered constitution was unable to throw off, brought about his death in May of that year, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year.

James Romney, who was his brother George's junior by ten years, owed his start in life to him, and he was the only one of the family who repaid him. Thanks to Romney's assistance he went to India, and made for himself a successful career as an officer in the Honourable East India Company's service, rising to the rank of Colonel before retiring. His character has been touched upon already. Judging from his portrait, reproduced in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's book, which was probably painted by his brother when he was home on leave in 1783, he was a handsome man, with a clever face, and a stronger mouth and chin, and more determined in character, than the artist. In James's case the strain of genius which ran through the family showed itself in a fondness for the pen rather than for the paint-brush. He remained a bachelor, though not from inclination; for he offered marriage to a young lady of nineteen, the widow of Mr. Halsey, Governor of Salsette, Bombay, but she refused him and returned to England, where she married Mr. Chitty Marshall. Colonel Romney commissioned his brother to paint her portrait, about 1788, and gave it to her as a wedding present. It was exhibited in the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1892, No. 135, a half-length seated figure, in a white dress and blue sash and ribbons, the head turned to the left, her hands clasped in front, and her fair hair falling on her shoulders. It has been well photographed recently by Messrs. Braun and Co.

The Colonel left India in 1802, and reached home in time to see his brother alive, but rapidly sinking, and in a childish condition. He visited Hayley, and promised his assistance in the preparation of the *Life*, but his own death at Bath in 1807 frustrated this plan. He was buried in Bath Abbey on October 28th. 'He died without the least pain or effort and it was known to those who were in the room by one sigh: a few minutes before, he had said, that he felt sleepy and would take a nap. For many Months he never had been in bed, but reposed on the Sofa in his Cloathes, as he was wholly unable to lie down, so that it appears to have been a happy Release. . . . A letter arrived a few days ago from Mrs. West which I have not opened and shall deliver to you. It appears by her writing to him that she is unacquainted with the late Event, but it will perhaps be now as well not to say anything to her about it till my Return. You are of course acquainted with her situation with regard to the Colonel.'[1]

[1] Letter from Mr. William Crutenden to Mr. Tennant in the possession of Mr. Lawrence Romney.

APPENDIX II

HONORA SNEYD AND THE 'SERENA' PICTURES

The original source of the legend that Romney's various pictures of 'Serena Reading' are portraits of Honora Sneyd, may be traced to a letter from Miss Seward to Mrs. M. Powys, included in her published correspondence, written on September 22nd, 1792, immediately after she had received an unexpected visit from Lovell Edgeworth, Honora's only son; together with other letters from the poetess to the 'Ladies of Llangollen.' She was much overcome by the meeting: 'What a new and impetuous sensation did I that instant feel!—Strong and tender affection rushing upon my heart for one whom, the preceding moment, I had considered as a stranger. With an involuntary emotion, I seized his hands, the tears starting into my eyes,—and I exclaimed, Good God! do I indeed see before me the only child of my dear Honora.

'When I had composed myself a little, I walked with him over the house, which had been the home, and she often called it the happy home, of his mother's infancy and youth. I shewed him those apartments in which she grew, she bloomed, and which yet seem so full of her. He appeared interested in examining them. I directed his attention to the paper profile, in miniature, of her, reduced by your hand, and to the print of Romney's Serena, which appears to me exactly what she was at sixteen.'

Throughout Miss Seward's letters the references to Honora are continual, and in more than one of them she states very distinctly that the resemblance between the second Mrs. R. L. Edgeworth and Serena was purely accidental. In 1797, she procured, after some trouble, one of the Serena engravings to send to her friends the 'Ladies of Llangollen.' In writing to Miss Ponsonby on October 30th of that year, she says:—

'I have been fortunate enough in procuring another copy of Romney's Serena, which I mentioned to you as having accidentally formed a perfect similitude of my lost Honora Sneyd's face and figure, when she was serenely perusing the printed and unimpassioned thoughts of others. To the varying glories of her countenance, when she was expressing her *own*, or listening to the effusions of genius, no pencil could do justice. But that sweet, that sacred decency, that reserved dignity of virgin grace, which characterized her look and air, when her thoughts were tranquil, live in this dear portrait, while the turn of the head and neck, and every feature, reflect hers, as in a mirror.

'The plate is now become so scarce, that fortune has singularly favoured my

attempts. It was procured in the country, and will be sent to London to be framed ere it travels to Langollen. The lively interest which you have each taken in her idea, excites my fervent wish that you should behold her as she *was*, in a lovely work of art, which recalls her image

> "From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years,
> In colours fresh, originally bright."

'Yes, I am ambitious that her form should be enshrined in the receptacle of grace and beauty, and appear there distinctly as those of Lady E. Butler and Miss Ponsonby are engraven on the memory and on the heart of their faithful,' etc.

She writes again some months later, on June 4th, 1798, to Lady Eleanor Butler:—

'Every line in that engraving bears her stamp and image, except those which, in a luckless moment, combined to attach the foot of a plough-boy to a form in every other point so beautiful. . . . Honora Sneyd, after she became Mrs. Edgeworth, sat to Smart, at that time a celebrated miniature-painter. He totally missed the likeness, which Major André has, from his then inexperience in the art, so faintly, and with so little justice to her beauty, caught. *Romney accidentally, and without having ever beheld her*, produced it completely. Yes, he drew, to represent the Serena of the Triumphs of Temper, his own abstract idea of perfect loveliness, and the form and the face of Honora Sneyd rose beneath his pencil. Few circumstances have proved so fortunate for the indulgence of my heart as this accidental resemblance.' (The italics are not Miss Seward's.)

Again in the following year, in writing to Mrs. M. Powys, October 17th, 1799:—

'I have shewn you the tinted print from Romney's fine picture of Serena in the Triumphs of Temper, and which bears such perfect, though accidental, resemblance to Honora, when she was in the glory of her virgin graces. It is in the very posture in which she often sat reading before she went to rest—so used she to fold her night-robe around her lovely limbs. The luxury of mournful delight with which I continually gaze upon that form, is one of the most precious comforts of my life.'

There is no need to multiply instances. Anna Seward, the personal friend of Romney, and intimate with even the smallest incidents of Honora's life, could not possibly have made a mistake on so important an event as a sitting to one of the leading painters of the day, and the legend must be regarded as having no foundation in truth. The engraving, which she sent to the Ladies of Llangollen, with 'Such was Honora Sneyd!' inscribed upon the frame, is the one by J. R. Smith in which Serena is represented in profile, reading by candle-light near a window through which the breaking dawn can be seen, and not the still more beautiful picture illustrated here (see Frontispiece); and it was, no doubt, this very inscription which was one of the original causes of the whole mistake.

The evidence of date, too, points to the impossibility of the legend. Hayley wrote the *Triumphs of Temper* in 1780. He had finished three cantos of the poem before Romney left Eartham, and the whole was finished by Christmas, and

published in the following year. Its success was instantaneous, and it was by far the most universally read of all Hayley's effusions. There is every probability that Romney painted at least the first of his 'Serenas' during this autumn visit of 1780, and very possibly the unnamed young lady[1] then drifting into a 'connubial attachment,' who was staying at Eartham, may have been his model.

Honora Sneyd died in the spring of 1780. She had been a member of the Seward household from the age of five until within two years of her marriage in 1773. She was eight years younger than Anna, her cousin, and was, says the latter, 'more lovely, more amiable, more interesting than any-thing I ever saw in the female form. As a child, I had loved her with the extremest fondness. Death had deprived me of my beloved and only sister, in the bloom of her youth, who had shared with me the delightful task of instructing our angelic pupil; and, when disappointed love threw all the energies of my soul into the channel of friendship, Honora was its chief object. The charms of her society, when her advancing youth gave equality to our connection, made Lichfield an Edenic scene to me, from the year 1766 to 1771. Her father[2] then recalled her to his own family, after having been fourteen years resident in ours. The domestic separation proved very grievous; but still she was in the same town; we were often together, and her heart was unchanged. . . . In May 1773 she married. Ah! how deeply was I a fellow-sufferer with Major André on this marriage!—but her attachment to him had never the tenderness of her friendship for me; it was a mere compound of gratitude and esteem, of which his letters shew that he was always aware. We both lost her for ever.'

This attractive young lady gathered admirers around her wherever she went before she became the second of the four wives of Richard Lovell Edgeworth. In addition to the ill-fated Major André, his successor in the post of Adjutant-General to the British forces in America, Colonel Barry, succumbed to her charms. That eccentric genius, Thomas Day, author of *Sandford and Merton*, offered her his hand, and, being refused, proposed to her sister Elizabeth, who afterwards became Edgeworth's third wife; and in 1770 the Earl of Warwick, when attending the festivities of Lichfield race-week, was so attentive as to cause flutterings in the Seward household. Edgeworth, who ran away with his first wife to Gretna Green, was unhappy in his marriage, and fell in love with Honora during a long visit to Dr. Darwin. He fled from temptation to France, but hastened back in 1773, on hearing of the death of his wife, and married Miss Sneyd four months later, taking her to Edgeworthstown, his home in Ireland. Three years later, in 1776, he brought her to England, renting a small house at Northchurch, in Hertfordshire, near Great Berkhampstead, where they spent two or three years in retirement, studying literature and the arts, with occasional visits to London, twenty-five miles away. Honora never returned to Ireland, as on the eve of departure in 1779 she was seized with the fatal illness which carried her off early in the following year. She died at Bigherton, near Shiffnal, and was buried at King's Weston.

It is certain, therefore, that as she died before Hayley began to write his poem, she could not have sat to Romney for its heroine. During her residence at North-

[1] See page 99.

[2] Edward Sneyd, youngest son of Ralph Sneyd, of Bishton, Staffordshire.

church, between 1776 and 1779, there would have been opportunities for her, had she wished it, to sit to him for her portrait as Mrs. Edgeworth; but if she had done so, it may be taken for granted that Miss Seward would have been well aware of it, and would have mentioned it in one of her numerous letters referring to Honora or the artist. All the evidence, indeed, points to the fact that Romney never saw her.

Romney painted her cousin Charlotte, daughter of Ralph Sneyd, of Keele, Staffordshire, who married Mr. Davies Davenport, of Capesthorne, in 1777. This is the very beautiful portrait which has been already described.[1]

Eight months after Honora's death Edgeworth married, at her dying request, her sister Elizabeth, though he believed her to be utterly unsuited to him, and he liked her less than any of her sisters. The marriage, however, turned out to be a great success, and when she in her turn died in 1797, her husband, then past fifty, was still so enamoured of the charms of matrimony that, six months later, he led a Miss Beaufort to the altar. This union, again, turned out as happily as the two earlier ones.

[1] See page 304.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF MODERN ENGRAVINGS AFTER GEORGE ROMNEY

COMPILED BY MR. ERNEST H. HARE

ACTON, MRS. LEE.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 15 in. × 24 in. Published January 1901.

AUSTEN, LADY. (*'Lavinia.'*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 13 in. × 17 in. Published February 1891.

BANKES, MRS. (*see Woodley, Miss Frances*).

BEAUCLERK, LADY MARGARET. (*As 'Serena.'*)
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 12⅞ in. × 16⅞ in. Published May 11, 1908.

BEAUTY AND THE ARTS (*see Clifden, Caroline, Lady*).

BLAIR, MRS.
Etching, by C. Waltner; 19 in. × 25 in. Published May 1904.

CANNING, MRS., AND CHILD.
Mezzotint, by S. E. Wilson; 12½ in. × 15½ in. Published January 3, 1908.

CARLISLE, CAROLINE, COUNTESS OF.
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 13 in. × 18 in. Published September 1898.
(*Mezzotint,* by James Walker, 1781.)

CLIFDEN, CAROLINE, LADY, AND SPENCER, LADY E. (*'Beauty and the Arts.'*)
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 29 in. × 23 in. Published April 1894.

CLIVE, HON. CHARLOTTE.
Mezzotint, by D. A. Wehrschmidt; 11½ in. × 15 in. Published May 1893.

CLOSE, MISS (*afterwards Mrs. Mark Currie*).
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 20 in. × 16 in. Published April 1894.

COOKE, MRS. BRYAN.
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 16 in. × 20 in. Published December 1896.

APPENDIX III

CRESPIGNY, MRS. DE.
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 15 in. × 19 in. Published June 1903.

CUMBERLAND, ALBINIA, LADY.
Mezzotint, by Mrs. M. Cormack; 16½ in. × 20 in. Published September 1890.

CURRIE, MRS. MARK (*see Close, Miss*).

DAWSON, MRS.
Mezzotint, by Miss G. Dale; 18 in. × 23 in. Published April 1894.

DAY, LADY (*Miss Benedetta Ramus*).
Mezzotint, by Mrs. M. Cormack; 16⅞ in. × 19¼ in. Published January 1895.
(*Mezzotint*, by William Dickinson, 1779.)

DERBY, ELIZABETH, COUNTESS OF.
Mezzotint, by Mrs. M. Cormack; 17 in. × 21 in. Published June 1898.
Mezzotint, by G. H. Every; 13 in. × 17 in. Published September 1898.
(*Mezzotint*, by John Dean, 1780.)

'DUCHESS, THE.'
Mezzotint, by Miss E. Milner; 11 in. × 21 in. Published November 1903.

DUNCOMBE, LADY CHARLOTTE.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 15 in. × 18 in. Published March 1900.

GLYN, MRS.
Mezzotint, by J. B. Pratt; 14 in. × 18 in. Published March 1901.

GORDON, DUCHESS OF.
Mezzotint, by J. B. Pratt; 17 in. × 22 in. Published May 1902.

GOWER CHILDREN. (*Five of the children of Granville, second Earl Gower, afterwards first Marquis of Stafford.*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 24 in. × 21 in. Published January 1902.
(*Mezzotint*, by J. R. Smith, 1781.)

GROVE, MRS.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 15 in × 19 in. Published September 1898.

HAMILTON, LADY (EMMA HART).
Mezzotint, by R. W. Hester; 15½ in. × 19 in. Published February 1903.

———
Mezzotint, by A. Hewlett; 12 in. × 14 in. Published March 3, 1908.

——— (*The Ambassadress.*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 17 in. × 22 in. Published October 1904.

——— (*As Ariadne.*)
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 15 in. × 19 in. Published June 1895.

HAMILTON, LADY (EMMA HART). (*As a Bacchante.*)
Mezzotint, by N. Kenealy; 7⅞ in. × 9⅞ in., oval. Published January 1890.

—— (*As a Bacchante.*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 17 in. × 21 in. Published April 1902.

—— (*As a Bacchante.*)
Mezzotint, by N. Hirst; 12 in × 15 in. Published January 1903.

—— (*As a Bacchante.*)
Stipple, by E. Tily; 9½ in. × 13¼ in. Published March 21, 1906.

—— (*In a Black Hat.*)
Mezzotint, by E. Stamp; 15 in. × 19 in. Published June 1902.

—— (*As Cassandra.*)
Mezzotint, by E. L. Haynes; 14 in. × 19 in. Published November 1901.

—— (*As Cassandra.*)
Mezzotint, by E. Bird; 9¼ in. × 9¼ in. Published November 19, 1908.

—— (*As Circe.*)
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14½ in. × 23 in. Published May 1894.

—— (*As Contemplation.*)
Mezzotint, by D. A. Wehrschmidt; 15½ in. × 19 in., oval. Published 1897.

—— (*As Daphne.*)
Mezzotint, by J. W. Chapman; 17 in. × 21 in. Published November 1894.

—— (*Emma.*)
Mezzotint, by G. Zobel; 9 in. × 11 in. Published February 1876.

—— (*Emma.*)
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 8 in. × 9¼ in. Published November 1895.

—— (*As Euphrosyne.*)
Mezzotint, by G. S. Shury; 10 in. × 12 in. Published May 1878.

—— (*As Joan of Arc.*)
Mezzotint, by Norman Hirst; 7 in. × 9 in. Published August 1901.

—— (*As Miranda.*)
Mezzotint, by C. Tomkins; 7 in. × 9 in. Published September 1896.

—— (*As Mirth.*)
Mezzotint, by J. B. Pratt; 14½ in. × 18 in. Published September 18, 1905.

—— (*As Nature.*)
Mezzotint, by Mrs. M. Cormack; 16⅜ in. × 19¾ in. Published December 1891.

APPENDIX III

HAMILTON LADY (EMMA HART). (*As Nature.*)
Mezzotint, by S. E. Wilson; 10 in. × 12 in. Published April 18, 1907.

—— (*As Nature.*)
Mezzotint, by Fred Miller; 8 in. × 10 in.

—— (*At Prayer.*)
Mezzotint, by Norman Hirst; 9 in. × 12 in. Published June 1904.

—— (*At Prayer.*)
Mezzotint, by E. L. Haynes; 16⅜ in. × 17⅝ in. Published March 20, 1906.

—— (*As the Seamstress.*)
Stipple, by J. Brown; 10 in. × 14 in. Published May 1882.
This is a portrait of Miss Lucy Vernon (see page 118).

—— (*Reading.*)
Stipple, by F. Holl, A.R.A.; 10 in. × 13 in. Published February 1878.

—— (*As Sensibility.*)
Mezzotint, by J. W. Chapman; 17 in. × 21 in. Published November 1894.

—— (*As Sensibility.*)
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 16 in. × 20 in. Published September 1898.

—— (*As a Shepherdess.*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 30 in. × 24 in. Published February 1905.
This is not a portrait of Lady Hamilton (see page 134).

—— (*At the Spinning Wheel.*)
Stipple and Etching, by C. H. Jeens; 10 in. × 14 in. Published February 1876.

—— (*At the Spinning Wheel.*)
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 15 in. × 21 in. Published September 1898.

—— (*At the Spinning Wheel.*)
Stipple, by E. Tily; 7½ in. × 10½ in. Published July 22, 1908.

—— (*Supplication.*)
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 15 in. × 18 in. Published April 1903.

—— (*As Venus.*)
Stipple, by Wallace Hester; 12⅝ in. × 19¾ in. Published May 22, 1907.

—— (*When Young.*)
Mezzotint, by H. T. Greenhead; 16 in. × 17 in. Published June 1895.

—— (*From the Study in the National Gallery, No.* 1668.)
Mezzotint, by J. Protheroe; 17 in. × 21 in. Published October 1903.

HAMILTON, LADY ISABELLA.
Mezzotint, by H. Sedcole; 14 in. × 23 in. Published November 1898.

HARROW GIPSY, A.
Mezzotint, by Miss E. Milner; 9 in. × 11 in. Published November 1899.

JORDAN, MRS.
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 16 in. × 20 in. Published September 1904.

'LADY, MY.'
Mezzotint, by Miss E. Milner; 17 in. × 21⅝ in. Published March 14, 1907.

LAVINIA (*see Lady Austen*).

MAITLAND, MISS LILLIE.
Mezzotint, by F. G. Stevenson; 6⅝ in. × 9⅞ in. Published February 24, 1908.

MANSFIELD, LOUISA CATHCART, COUNTESS OF (*see Stormont, Lady Louisa*).

MARLBOROUGH, CAROLINE, DUCHESS OF.
Mezzotint, by A. C. Coppier; 14⅞ in. × 23½ in. Published July 30, 1907.
(*Mezzotint,* by John Jones, 1791.)

MATERNAL LOVE. (*Portrait of a Lady and Child in the National Gallery.*)
Etching, by F. Laguillermie; 16 in. × 21 in. Published September 1904.

MILNER, LADY.
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 14 in. × 23 in. Published November 1896.

MILNES, CHARLOTTE FRANCES BENTINCK, LADY.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 23 in. Published June 1899.

MONSON, LADY.
Mezzotint, by Norman Hirst; 16 in. × 24¼ in. Published October 31, 1906.

NEWBERY, MRS.
Mezzotint, by Miss E. Milner; 14 in. × 18 in. Published May 1905.

PARSON'S DAUGHTER, THE. (*The Picture in the National Gallery.*)
Mezzotint, by G. Robinson; 13 in. × 14 in., oval. Published November 1888.

PITT, MRS. ANN. (*Impersonating Lady Hamilton as 'Mirth.'*)
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 14 in. × 18 in. Published March 1903.

POULETT, LADY.
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 14 in. × 23 in. Published March 1897.
Mezzotint, by Norman Hirst; 16 in. × 20 in. Published November 1900.

RAMUS, MISS BENEDETTA (*see Lady Day*).

RAIKES, MRS.
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 16 in. × 21 in. Published September 1904.

ROBINSON, MRS. (*Perdita.*)
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 12 in. × 16 in. Published February 1897.

ROBINSON, MRS.
Mixed, by Sir F. Seymour Haden; 9 in. × 10¾ in., oval. Published November 1876.

RUCK, MISS MARY.
Mezzotint, by H. Macbeth-Raeburn; 14 in. × 17 in. Published December 1904.

RUSSELL, LADY, AND CHILD.
Mezzotint, by R. B. Parkes; 13 in. × 17 in. Published November 1878.

SCHULTZ, MISS.
Mezzotint, by R. W. Macbeth, R.A.; 15 in. × 18 in. Published March 1901.

SERENA (*see Beauclerk, Lady Margaret*).

SLIGO, LADY.
Mezzotint, by G. Robinson; 13 in. × 14 in., oval. Published July 1896.

SMYTH, MRS. CARMICHAEL.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 16 in. Published April 1903.

SPENCER, THE LADIES (*see Clifden, Lady C., etc.*).

STAFFORD FAMILY (*see Gower Children*).

STANLEY, MRS.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 15 in. × 18⅝ in. Published April 4, 1906.

STEWART, LADY.
Mezzotint, by J. Cother Webb; 14 in. × 16 in. Published October 1900.

STORMONT, LADY LOUISA (*Countess of Mansfield*).
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 19 in. × 24 in. Published October 1889.
(*Mezzotint*, by J. R. Smith, 1780.)

SULLIVAN, LADY.
Mezzotint, by R. B. Parkes; 13 in. × 17 in. Published October 1877.

SUTHERLAND, DUCHESS-COUNTESS OF.
Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 16 in. × 19 in. Published January 1902.

THORNHILL, MASTER. ('*Rustic Meditation.*')
Mezzotint, by J. Scott; 11 in. × 15 in. Published June 1882.

TICKELL, MRS.
Mezzotint, by J. B. Pratt; 14 in. × 17 in. Published October 1900.

———
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 15 in. × 19 in. Published August 1903.

TOWNSHEND, LADY.
Mezzotint, by T. G. Appleton; 15 in. × 19 in. Published September 1903.

TROTTER, MRS., OF BUSH.
Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 16 in. Published October 1901.

VERNON, MISS LUCY (*see Lady Hamilton as the Seamstress*).

VERNON CHILDREN.

Mezzotint, by J. B. Pratt; 17 in. × 21¾ in. Published February 22, 1906.

WARD, LADY ARABELLA.

Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 16 in. Published June 1903.

WARD, MRS. TOWNLEY.

Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 15 in. × 23 in. Published June 1898.

WARREN, MRS. ANN.

Mezzotint, by W. Henderson; 13⅞ in. × 17½ in. Published July 25, 1907.

WARWICK, HENRIETTA, COUNTESS OF.

Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 17 in. Published September 1897.

WHATMAN, MRS.

Mezzotint, by Miss E. Gulland; 9 in. × 11 in. Published April 1901.

WOODLEY, MISS FRANCES (*Mrs. Bankes*).

Mezzotint, by H. Scott Bridgwater; 14 in. × 20 in. Published September 1895.
(*Mezzotint*, by James Walker, 1781.)

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